STARSHIP TROOPERS

based on the novel by Robert Heinlein
screenplay by Edward Neumeier

PRODUCTION DRAFT 4/17/96

1 FROM THE FEDERAL NET -- JOIN UP NOW!

Proud YOUNG PEOPLE in uniform, the bloom of human evolution.

YOUNG PEOPLE
I'm doing my part... I'm doing my part... I'm doing my part... Me, too...

2 The FEDERAL FLAG flaps in the wind.

OFFICIAL VOICE
They're doing their part. Are you? Join the Mobile Infantry and save the world! Service guarantees citizenship. Would you like to know more?

3 BUG METEOR!

Behold actual pictures of a METEOR, this one a mile across, as it hurtles past a STARSHIP and toward the EARTH.

OFFICIAL VOICE
The bugs send another meteor our way!

A BRIGHT EXPLOSION in space out beyond the moon.

OFFICIAL VOICE
But this time, we're ready! Planetary defenses are better than ever! Would you like to know more?

5 KLENDATHU -- WHY WE HAVE TO FIGHT!

Klendathu, a fierce orange planet ringed by an asteroid belt, orbits a double star.

OFFICIAL VOICE
Klendathu, source of the bug meteor attacks, orbits a twin star system whose brutal gravitational forces produce an unlimited supply of bug meteorites in the form of this asteroid belt...

6 A "You Are Here" map of the KNOWN GALAXY shows the Earth in relationship to the BUG PLANETARY SYSTEM and Klendathu.

OFFICIAL VOICE
To ensure the safety of our solar system, Klendathu must be eliminated! Would you like to know more?

7 LIVE BROADCAST -- FROM ORBIT -- THE INVASION OF KLENDATHU!

Four BATTLE GROUPS, sixty STARSHIPS strong, orbit the yellow and gray bug planet. Graphics: KLENDATHU: THE INVASION.

OFFICIAL VOICE
We break net now and take you live to Klendathu where the invasion has begun!

8 EXT KLENDATHU -- NIGHT -- THE CAMERA

finds the NET CORRESPONDANT caught off guard by sudden battlefield chaos. The CAMERA WHIPS to Mobile Infantry CAP TROOPERS as they fall back fighting a desperate retrograde action.

NET CORRESPONDENT
We've just landed here on what cap troopers are calling "Big K" with the 6th Mobile Infantry Division... It's an ugly planet, a bug planet, a planet hostile to life as we know iGKKKKKK!

Blood hits the lens as the Correspondent is cut in half. The CAMERA catches a glimpse of HUGE JAWS as Cap Trooper JOHNNY RICO, blows away SOMETHING BIG with his MORITA ASSAULT RIFLE. Johnny spins the unseen camerman around.

JOHNNY
Get out of here... NOW!

The cap troopers move out, among them DIZZY FLORES, ACE LEVY, and KITTEN SMITH. The CAMERA pauses, unsure.

FED NET CENTRAL (O.S.)
FOLLOW THEM...! GO! GO!

The CAMERA follows. The PULSE of BUG BATTERIES is blinding. Cap Troopers scream as they are torn apart right and left by an enemy seen only in disorienting glimpses.

The topography splits the group in two, and the CAMERA follows Johnny. Something slices Kitten Smith, and he goes down screaming.

JOHNNY
KITTEN!

Johnny stops to help his comrade. A CLAW slashes into him.

JOHNNY
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!

Now something grabs the CAMERA, spinning it around. We glimpse the hideous JAWS of an ARACHNID WARRIOR.

CAMERAMAN (O.S.)
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!

The CAMERA hits the ground. Johnny, his leg sliced open, crawls into CAMERA, trying to get away from the dark INSECT SHAPES that close in on him.

JOHNNY
Oh God...Oh God!

He fires until his gun is empty. His eyes glaze over. The image starts to break up as the CAMERA fritzes out and dies.

RASCZAK (O.S.)
Rico... hey, Rico...

FLASHBACK:

9 INT EDUCATION CENTER -- CLASSROOM -- DAY -- JEAN RASCZAK

40, a rugged teacher who proudly displays his missing hand, scowls at Johnny from the front of the classroom, bemused.

RASCZAK
...pay attention!

Johnny looks up from his desk, sheepish, covering something he's working at on his TouchPad screen.

JOHNNY
Sorry, Mr. Rasczak.

When Rasczak continues, Johnny goes back to work.

RASCZAK
Let's sum up. This year we explored the failure of democracy caused by social scientists who brought the world to the brink of chaos. We talked about how the veterans took control and imposed a stability that has lasted for generations since...

Johnny draws an ANIMATED CARTOON: CARTOON JOHNNY and CARMEN against the stars coming together for a kiss.

RASCZAK
You know these facts, but have I taught you anything of value this year? You. Why are only citizens allowed to vote?

Rasczak points at another student, LANNY, with his stump.

LANNY
It's a reward... what the Federation gives you for doing Federal Service.

Rasczak is crestfallen, makes a big show of patience.

RASCZAK
No. Something given has no value! Haven't I taught you dimwits anything? I guess they oughta revoke my teaching credential...

Laughter. Behind him, DIZZY FLORES, 18, athletic and pretty, tries to get a look at what he's doing.

RASCZAK
When you vote, you're exercising political authority. You're using force. And force, my friends, is violence, the supreme authority from which all other authority derives.

CARL JENKINS, 18, superintelligent, jumps in.

CARL
Gee, we always thought you were the supreme authority, Mr. Rasczak.

Laughter. Rasczak grins.

RASCZAK
In my classroom, you bet. Whether it's exerted by ten or ten billion, political authority is violence by degree. The people we call citizens have earned the right to wield it.

Dizzy baits Rasczak playfully.

DIZZY
My mother always says that violence never solves anything.

RASCZAK
Really? I wonder what the city fathers of Hiroshima would have to say about that. You.

Rasczak points at CARMEN IBANEZ, 18, smart, driven, and certainly the most beautiful girl at school.

CARMEN
They probably wouldn't say anything. Hiroshima was destroyed.

Johnny presses "SEND" on his desk, and the animation appears across the way on Carmen's screen.

RASCZAK
Correct. Naked force has settled more issues in history than any other factor. The contrary opinion, 'violence never solves anything,' is wishful thinking at its worst.

Carmen grins at the kissing cartoon, enters changes on her touch screen.

RASCZAK
People who forget that always pay... They pay with their lives and their freedom!

Rasczak notices Johnny's distracted, point to him with his stump.

RASCZAK
You. Tell me the moral difference, if any, between the citizen and the civilian?

JOHNNY
The difference lies in the field of civic virtue. A citizen accepts personal responsibility for...

Johnny glances down at the cartoon, sees that cartoon Carmen is now blowing a big bubble that blocks the amorous advance of cartoon Johnny.

JOHNNY
...the safety of the body politic, defending it with his life. The civilian does not.

RASCZAK
The exact words of the text. But do you understand it? Do you BELIEVE it?

Inevitably, the bubble blows up in cartoon Johnny's face.

JOHNNY
Uh, I don't know.

Carmen turns, mischievious, sticks her tongue out at Johnny.

RASCZAK
Of course you don't. I doubt if any of you here would recognize 'civic virtue' if it bit you on the ass!

A bell rings. Rasczak shrugs, indifferent.

RASCZAK
Well, that's it, the end of another school year. Have a nice life.

10 EXT EDUCATION CENTER -- HALLWAY -- DAY -- JOHNNY

waits for Carmen at the door. Nearby a COUPLE kisses passionately. When she appears, Johnny pulls Carmen into his arms but when he tries to kiss her, she demurs.

CARMEN
Not here... Com'on, let's see if they've posted the math final.

STUDENT
Hey, Rico, we gonna take Tesla?

JOHNNY
We'll kill'em...

11 EXT QUAD -- DAY -- JOHNNY AND CARMEN

join other students around a MULTI-SCREEN INFORMATION BOARD.

CARMEN
First thing Fleet Academy looks at is your math scores. Wish me luck!

Carmen enters her name, receives her score: 97%! She beams.

JOHNNY
Good for you.

CARMEN
Your turn...

Then she spots Carl across the way talking with MARCO, 19.

CARMEN
Hold on... I wanna talk to Marco.
His sister's at Fleet!

Carmen rushes off. Johnny checks his score: 35%! Crushed, he makes sure no one else has seen. Carl walks up to him.

CARL
Thirty-five percent... that's
great!

Carl keyboards in a quick command. JOHNNY RICO -- 35% suddenly fills the entire screen.

JOHNNY
Carl...!

Students point and laugh. Carmen looks up from her conversation with Marco, smiles sympathetically. Carl resets the system. Johnny's score disappears.

CARL
So, you two still haven't done it
yet, have you? Don't lie.

JOHNNY
I'm not in any hurry...

Carl points out Dizzy, talking with friends.

CARL
Others are waiting.

JOHNNY
Did you read her mind?

CARL
Don't have to... it's pretty
clear what she wants.

It's true. You can tell by the way she looks at Johnny.

JOHNNY
Yeah, but I want Carmen.

CARL
You got it bad.

Carmen returns to Johnny as Carl heads off.

CARL
Don't forget about this
afternoon.
(to Carmen)
He's always late when he walks
you home to fish for a kiss.

Carmen rolls her eyes, gives Carl a shove.

CARMEN
Get out of here, Carl!
(to Johnny)
Marco's sister made pilot.

Johnny puts his arm around Carmen.

JOHNNY
So will you.

Dizzy walks by.

CARMEN
I mean, can you imagine flying half a million tons of starship... You gotta have nerves of steel!

DIZZY
Let's see how you hold up in Biology.

12 INT BIOLOGY LAB -- DAY -- THE BIOLOGY TEACHER

is older, very spry, also blind. She uses a clear plastic cane to navigate among twenty covered lab tables. Johnny and Carmen take one table, Dizzy and Carl another.

BIOLOGY TEACHER
For our final today, please identify the mouthparts, the abdominal organs, and for extra credit, locate the nerve cord and count the ganglia. You may begin.

The students remove the covers to reveal large alien bugs, 60 centimeter ARKELLIAN SAND BEETLES, then wrestle the big dead insects onto their backs for dissection. Carmen is disgusted.

CARMEN
Eeuch!

JOHNNY
Aw, com'on, it's just a bug. Better put your goggles on.

Johnny slices the abdomen open. Green fluid sprays.

BIOLOGY TEACHER
Just a bug, huh? We humans like to think we are Nature's finest achievement. I'm afraid it isn't true. This Arkellian Sand Beetle is superior in many ways...

Johnny applies a spreader and jacks the insect's abdominal cavity open with a resounding crack. Bug guts gush out. Carmen looks away quickly, concentrates on the teacher.

BIOLOGY TEACHER
...it reproduces in vast numbers, has no ego, doesn't know about death, and so is the perfect selfless member of society.

CARMEN
But humans have created art, mathematics and interstellar travel.

Dizzy innocently waves an amputated bug leg in Carmen's face. Carmen turns away, looking ill.

BIOLOGY TEACHER
True, but before you let that go to your head, take the example of the Arachnids, a highly organized, highly evolved insect society.

She pushes a button on her cane and a hologram of a two meter tall ARACHNID WARRIOR appears at the front of the classroom.

BIOLOGY TEACHER
By human standards they are relatively stupid but their evolution stretches over millions of years and now they can colonize planets by hurling their spore into space...

Johnny pulls strange looking insect organs out of the abdominal cavity and throws them into the lab sink.

JOHNNY
Well, if that's the crop, that must be the gastric caecal...

CARMEN
Excuse me...!

She heads for the door, hand over her mouth.

13A INT TRANSPORTER -- PLATFORM -- DAY -- CARMEN

boards the transporter car. Johnny follows, but she stops him.

CARMEN
You can't come home with me...

JOHNNY
You can make me coffee.

CARMEN
I thought you were going to help Carl.

JOHNNY
Carl can wait.

CARMEN
Johnny, my dad's home today.

Johnny's face darkens with frustration.

JOHNNY
Oh, com'on... What's his problem? He treats me like I'm a criminal...!

CARMEN
It's not you, Johnny. It's your parents. They're not citizens. They have money so they don't need to be citizens.

JOHNNY
Well, if your dad doesn't like me, how come we get along so well?

CARMEN
Sometimes I do what I want.

Carmen slides the transporter door shut. ZAPPP! She's gone. Johnny grins, happy to be in love.

14 INT CARL'S HOUSE -- BASEMENT -- DAY -- THE WORDS "NO MATCH"

appear full screen. Carl sits at a work station. Johnny sits facing Carl in a SPECIAL CHAIR with blinders and a small key pad on the arm rest.

CARL
Don't think about it... go on instinct. Try to visualize...

Johnny cannot see the images of playing cards as they are displayed on the SCREEN behind him. Carl selects a card, concentrates on the image of the six of diamonds.

JOHNNY
I see the ace of spades.

Johnny keys in the ace of spades, and the computer indicates "NO MATCH". Carl puts up the jack of clubs.

CARL
Statistically speaking you should've guessed right just by accident. Try another...

JOHNNY
So my psychic abilities are zero and I'm unlucky.

Johnny keys in his guess. NO MATCH.

CARL
Luck's not a factor. No one really knows why some people are sensitive and some aren't. That's why they do these kind of Federal studies.

Without warning, a sleek FERRET scampers up Carl's lap and jumps onto his keyboard, fritzing the monitor.

CARL
Cyrano, shit...! Time out...

The ferret retreats. Johnny knows this animal, reaches down to scratch his neck.

JOHNNY
He just wants attention. You don't play with him anymore.

Carl concentrates for a moment.

CARL
Go bug Mom, Cyrano.

Cyrano's eyes widen. He bolts out of Johnny's hands, scurrying across the floor and racing up the stairs.

JOHNNY
How do you make him do that?

CARL
I gave him the impression that there was a grub crawling up my mom's leg. He's on a mission to go eat it.

From upstairs, CARL'S MOM shrieks.

MOM (O.S.)
Get out! Get out! CARL...!

JOHNNY
I sure hope you don't do anything like that to me.

Carl grins, mock malevolent.

CARL
Don't be afraid. Can't do human... yet. Com'on, let's go.

The work station comes up again. Carl puts up more cards, and Johnny misses them all.

JOHNNY
You still gonna sign up for Federal Service on Saturday?

CARL
Passport to the Universe. Who wouldn't want that?

JOHNNY
I've been thinking about applying, too.

CARL
Your father'll never let you.

JOHNNY
Hey, it's my decision... Carmen's going to be a citizen, and I don't think it'll work out for us if I'm not.

CARL
Love... how excruciatingly pathetic. Now try and pay attention.

Carl puts a new card up. Johnny makes his selection. The computer indicates a match. Surprised, Johnny peers around at the monitor. It's the queen of hearts.

CARL
Well, Queen of hearts... whad'ya know about that!

15 INT ATHLETIC FIELD -- DAY -- WHAM! TIGERS AND GIANTS

collide. The play is hard-hitting and gymnastic. Johnny moves the ball, flips high in the air over the Giant defensive line, makes ten meters before he is brought down.

16 INT STANDS -- DAY -- THE CROWD

cheers as Johnny runs back to join his team. FEDERAL SLOGANS share space with CORPORATE SPONSORS. He waves at Carmen as he passes her where she stands with others beneath a banner that reads: REGIONAL FINAL -- UNI VS. TESLA.

17 INT HUDDLE -- DAY -- JOHNNY

and other Tigers listen as quarterback Dizzy calls the plays.

DIZZY
Kick three, fade left. On two.

They knock fists, then break for the line of scrimmage.

18 INT SCRIMMAGE LINE -- DAY -- THE TIGERS

have the ball. The Giant's QUARTERBACK assigns ZANDER BARCALOW, 18, handsome, super-confident, to guard Johnny.

ZANDER
Time's running out.

Zander points. The SCOREBOARD shows TIGERS 69, GIANTS 70, three minutes and counting on the clock. Johnny grins.

JOHNNY
A lot can happen in three minutes.

DIZZY
Hut... hut!

Johnny takes the hand-off, flips over a gauntlet of Giant guards. Zander hurls himself at Johnny, misses. Johnny scores. Zander tumbles into the crowd, loses his helmet.

19 INT SIDELINES -- DAY -- ZANDER

looks up and sees Carmen, smiling as she offers him a hand. She helps him up. He doesn't let go of her hand immediately.

CARMEN
Are you alright?

ZANDER
Much better.

20 INT ATHLETIC FIELD -- DAY -- JOHNNY

runs back to join his team as the REFEREE calls time in. The Tigers lead 71-70. Johnny frowns when he sees Carmen talking to Zander on the sidelines, shaking his hand, smiling.

21 INT SIDELINE -- DAY -- ZANDER

adjusts his helmet.

ZANDER
So what are you doing after the game?

CARMEN
Everyone's going to the dance. Aren't you?

The ref blows his whistle at Zander, signaling impatiently.

ZANDER
I don't know. It's my last night as a civilian. I ship out for Tereshkova tomorrow.

Zander heads for the field. Carmen follows as far as she can.

CARMEN
You're going to the Fleet Academy? That's where I want to go!

22 INT SCRIMMAGE LINE -- DAY -- THE GIANTS

are in possession. Zander takes position in front of Johnny.

JOHNNY
Don't get any ideas about my girlfriend.

ZANDER
Hey, all is fair in love and war....

Johnny scowls at Zander, turns his head to look back at Carmen. She waves, smiling.

DIZZY
WATCH THE FLY...!

Zander knocks Johnny on his ass, snags the ball and scores. It's TIGERS 71, GIANTS 72 and less than a minute to go.

23 INT HUDDLE -- DAY -- DIZZY

orders up the next play. Johnny keeps looking over his shoulder because Zander's back talking to Carmen again.

DIZZY
Perry, fake left. Bertotti, go long. Rico, flip six, three hole. Rico? Hey!

Dizzy slams Johnny upside his helmet with her forearm.

JOHNNY
What?

DIZZY
You were drifting. Flip six, three hole. On one, got it?

JOHNNY
Just throw me the ball, Diz.

24 INT SCRIMMAGE LINE -- DAY -- JOHNNY

takes position again across the line from Zander who now grins at Johnny broadly. Johnny doesn't grin back.

DIZZY
Hut... hut... hut!

At the snap, Johnny breaks for open field. Dizzy throws. Johnny catches it, trips Zander up painfully, and scores as a horn sounds the game's finish. Dizzy, pumped, makes a fist.

DIZZY
Hooah!

25 INT ATHLETIC FIELD -- DAY -- UNI FANS

cheer. Tigers do flips in the air. Giants look dejected. Zander picks himself up, watches Johnny leave with Carmen.

26 INT JOHNNY'S HOUSE -- DAY -- JOHNNY

walks through a room filled with elegant furniture, all spiffed up for the big dance. His MOTHER catches him preening in front of a mirror.

MOTHER
Who said you could grow up so fast?

JOHNNY
Aw, don't get mushy.

Johnny's FATHER enters carrying a FEDERAL SERVICE CATALOGUE.

FATHER
This came for you today. I presume at your request.

JOHNNY
A lot of my friends are doing Federal Service...

MOTHER
You aren't thinking of applying...?

Johnny shrugs.

FATHER
Have you lost your mind? I'd rather take ten lashes in Public Square than see you ruin your life.

JOHNNY
It's a term of service, it's not a career. I just want to get out on my own and see the Galaxy for a couple years.

MOTHER
Johnny, people get hurt... people get killed in the Federal Service. If something happened to you I don't --

FATHER
Who gave you this idea? It's that teacher. What's his name? You know the one I mean.

JOHNNY
Mr. Rasczak.

Johnny's father makes himself a drink at a side table bar.

FATHER
Silly name. Probably a foreigner. There ought to be a law against using a school as a recruiting station!

JOHNNY
No... Rasczak doesn't do that at all. He sorta discourages you really.

FATHER
Good, because you're going to Harvard and that's the end of it.

JOHNNY
It's my decision, you know.

FATHER
Oh, is that how it is?

MOTHER
Wait you two. Dad and I have a surprise for you that will settle this. Can you guess what it is?

JOHNNY
Uh, no.

FATHER
You want to see the galaxy? What about a trip to the Outer Rings?

JOHNNY
Zegema Beach! I've always wanted to go there.

MOTHER
Good good, then it's all settled.

Johnny's father hands Johnny a drink in a little glass.

27 EXT EDUCATIONAL CENTER -- QUAD -- NIGHT -- A BAND

plays up tempo music under the stars. Everyone has dressed up for the "FAREWELL DANCE". Tables have been set up around the fountain pool. Rasczak and other TEACHERS chaperon.

Several students wear cadet uniforms indicating Federal Service enlistment.

Dizzy, dressed pretty, stands alone near the dance floor, watching Johnny talking with Carmen. When Carmen heads away, she approaches.

DIZZY
Hey, Rico, wanna dance?

JOHNNY
Actually, Diz, I promised Carmen...

DIZZY
Too bad for her if she's not around.

Dizzy pulls him onto the floor, holds him close.

DIZZY
You know, it's sad... Most of us probably won't see each other again after tonight.

There is an invitation here. Johnny doesn't take it.

JOHNNY
You still gonna play for Rio?

DIZZY
Looks like, unless Tokyo lets me start.

JOHNNY
Well, anyone who gets you is lucky.

DIZZY
How come we never got together?

Dizzy looks at Johnny meaningfully.

JOHNNY
Can't we just be friends, Diz?

DIZZY
Sure.

Johnny sees Rasczak across the way, apparently leaving.

JOHNNY
Uh, look, Diz... I want to talk to Mr. Rasczak.

DIZZY
You better go if you want to catch him...

Johnny grins sheepish thanks as he goes after Rasczak.

JOHNNY
Mr. Rasczak...!

Dizzy tries to look nonchalant standing alone on the dance floor. She turns to see Carl in an ill-fitting tux watching her with a wry smile.

28 EXT FOUNTAIN POOL -- NIGHT -- JOHNNY

catches up to Rasczak.

JOHNNY
Mister Rasczak?

RASCZAK
What is it, Rico?

JOHNNY
I just wanted to say thanks. Your class was the best one I had this year.

RASCZAK
(smiling)
Well, it's not really my job to please. Hope you learned something.

JOHNNY
I wanna join up, Mr. Rasczak. I think I have what it takes to be a citizen.

RASCZAK
Good for you. Go find out.

JOHNNY
Well, my parents are against it, and I know it's my choice, but I was wondering... What would you do if you were me?

RASCZAK
Figuring things out for yourself is the only freedom anyone really has. Use that freedom. Make up your own mind, Rico.

A spotlight finds the BAND LEADER.

BAND LEADER
Alright, everybody, this is the last dance, so let's turn down the lights and make it a slow one..

The lights go down.

29 EXT DANCE FLOOR -- NIGHT -- JOHNNY

finds Carmen talking with Zander who looks smart in his cadet uniform. Carmen is holding his FLEET PIN, a pair of silver wings.

CARMEN
Johnny, this is Zander.

ZANDER
Yeah, we know each other from the game. No hard feelings?

JOHNNY
None at all... We won. Com'on, Carmen, it's the last dance...

CARMEN
Well, maybe I'll see you at the academy.

Zander takes back the wings and pins them to his tunic.

ZANDER
Good luck.

Johnny pulls Carmen out on the dance floor among other couples.

CARMEN
Zander's going for pilot, too.

JOHNNY
You two have so much in common.

Carmen looks him in the eye.

CARMEN
Johnny Rico... are you jealous?

JOHNNY
Well... maybe.

CARMEN
You don't have to be jealous.

They are about to kiss when Dizzy and Carl dance past, awkwardly because Carl is a terrible dancer.

CARL
Hey, break it up there, you two. There's a place for that sort of thing you know...!

Dizzy gives Johnny a big wink as she turns past him, dancing away with Carl.

JOHNNY
I've been thinking... and I'm gonna do it, Carmen. I'm gonna go for Federal Service.

CARMEN
Really? That's wonderful! Carl and I are going down to sign up tomorrow. Come with us.

JOHNNY
I will.

They kiss, and when they break, she whispers:

CARMEN
My father's not home tonight...

The FEDERAL ANTHEM begins.

DISSOLVE TO:

39 INT AUDITORIUM -- DAY -- PAN DOWN FROM THE FEDERAL FLAG

to Johnny and Carmen and Carl as they take the Federal Service oath with 150 other people. Carmen wears a gleaming silver FLEET PIN on her chest.

JOHNNY ET AL
...of my own free will, without promise, coercion, or inducement, after having been duly advised and warned of the meaning and consequences of this oath, do now enroll in the Federal Service of the Terran Federation for not less than two years and as much longer as may be required by the needs of the Service...

40 INT LOBBY -- DAY -- JOHNNY AND CARMEN

line up at a checkout desk, handing a RECRUITING SERGEANT their paperwork. He takes the forms, tears and stamps them.

RECRUITING SERGEANT
Fresh meat for the grinder, huh? How'd you kids do?

CARMEN
I'm gonna be a pilot.

RECRUITING SERGEANT
Good for you. We need every pilot we can get.

Carl joins them, handing his papers over.

JOHNNY
Did you get Starside R&D?

CARL
No...

JOHNNY
I don't believe it!

CARL
... I got Games & Theory.

Well, everyone's a little impressed by this.

CARMEN
Games & Theory? That's Military Intelligence...

JOHNNY
Way to go, Carl!

RECRUITING SERGEANT
Next time we meet, I'll probably have to salute you. What about you, son?

JOHNNY
Infantry, sir.

The Recruiting Sergeant beams, offers his hand. Johnny takes it, sees that it is an ARTICULATED PROSTHETIC LIMB.

RECRUITING SERGEANT
Well, good for you. The Mobile Infantry made me the man I am today.

Just what Johnny wanted to hear. The Recruiting Sergeant spins in his chair to deposit the paperwork in a tray. Johnny sees that he is missing both legs, swallows hard.

41 EXT FEDERAL BUILDING -- CARMEN

takes Johnny and Carl by the arm as they walk.

CARMEN
Hey, let's all make a vow. No matter what we'll always be friends.

Carmen puts her hand out.

JOHNNY
I'll go for that.

Johnny puts his hand over Carmen's. Carl puts his hand out, too, but stops short of adding it to theirs.

CARL
Well, we're all gonna be millions of light years away from each other, and chances are we'll never see each other again, but sure...

Now he adds his hand with a resounding SLAP!

42 INT JOHNNY'S HOUSE -- DAY -- JOHNNY

stands sullenly as his Father rages at him.

FATHER
You'll resign, and that's all there is to it! It might look bad, but if that's the worst you suffer...

JOHNNY
I won't quit!

FATHER
I'm telling you, you will! You're not going back. You're going to go on vacation!

JOHNNY
I'm not going on vacation! I want to be a citizen! It's my decision. I made it.

Johnny turns for the door. His father throws his last shot.

FATHER
You walk out that door, you're cut off, young man... You understand me? Alright, THAT'S IT, YOU'RE...

43 EXT JOHNNY'S HOUSE -- FRONT PATIO -- DAY -- JOHNNY

walks out, grim, where his mother waits for him with tears in her eyes. At the end of the lane is a TRANSPORTER.

FATHER (O.S.)
...CUT OFF!

MOTHER
Johnny, why won't you change your mind? Does citizenship mean so much to you?

JOHNNY
Well, yeah, sure...

MOTHER
I hope so. I hope you don't ruin your life over some silly little girl who wants to look handsome in a uniform.

Johnny's face reddens.

JOHNNY
Don't talk about Carmen that way.

Johnny turns on his heel, marches into the transporter, ZAPPP!

44 INT FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION HUB -- DAY -- JOHNNY

looks for Carmen among hundreds of young people bound for Federal Service destinations. Recruits wear civilian clothes. There are many people in uniform.

P.A (O.S.)
Outbound group 1380, Ursa Minor and Sirius, now transporting at bank 17.

Now he sees her entering struggling with luggage. Johnny rushes to help her and soon he is carrying all her bags.

JOHNNY
You're late.

CARMEN
My Dad had to help me pack. Suddenly he's afraid he's never gonna see me again or something. It was sweet, but it took forever. Anyway, I guess I'm ready to go.

JOHNNY
Me, too. I'm wearing everything I own.

Johnny takes her bags. Carmen moves into the ticket line. Johnny struggles to follow.

CARMEN
I'm sorry your parents were mad.

JOHNNY
Who cares! The Federation'll give me everything I need for the next two years, right?

CARMEN
You talk to Carl?

JOHNNY
He left this morning. He couldn't say where.

Carmen logs in, enters her destination: LUNA -- TERESHKOVA FLEET ACADEMY. The ticket station spits out a pass.

CARMEN
It's exciting going away, but I'm scared... aren't you?

Carmen moves toward the transporters.

JOHNNY
I'm gonna miss you.

CARMEN
I'll miss you, too, Johnny.

Johnny stops her, takes her by the arms.

JOHNNY
I love you.

P.A. (O.S.)
Outbound group 94A, Tereshkova, all sections, transporting at bank 5.

CARMEN
Oh, that's me.

She scans her pass, but Johnny stops her again.

JOHNNY
Com'on, just say it. Try it on for size.

CARMEN
Alright. I love you.

They kiss. She turns toward the transporter with:

CARMEN
Don't forget to write!

JOHNNY
I won't.

ZAPPP! And she's gone.

45 FROM THE FEDERAL NET -- A WORLD THAT WORKS!

Rapt CHILDREN listen as a SOLDIER shows them his Morita. An AMPUTEE receives a new arm and plays the piano.

OFFICIAL VOICE
Citizen Rule. People making a better tomorrow! Would you like to know more?

46 CRIME & PUNISHMENT -- TONIGHT!

A CRIMINAL stands before three JUDGES in a FEDERAL COURT. Next we see a LETHAL INJECTION FACILITY, vacant, waiting.

OFFICIAL VOICE
A murderer was captured and tried today. Sentence: DEATH. Execution tonight at six, all Net, all channels. Would you like to know more?

47 NOTICE -- ARE YOU PSYCHIC?

A Federal clinic specializing in psychic research. Glimpse testing units similar to the one we saw in Carl's basement.

OFFICIAL VOICE
If you think you're psychic, maybe you are. Federal studies are being conducted in your community. Take advantage of the many Federal benefits available for psychic citizens. Would you like to know more?

48 TRAVEL ADVISORY -- INSECT TRAGEDY ON DANTANA

A prefab township sits on the shores of a tranquil alien bay. Then, a "You Are Here" map of the Known Universe.

OFFICIAL VOICE
Disregarding Federal warnings, Mormon extremists established Port Joe Smith, a settlement of 300 on Dantana, a system just inside the Arachnid Quarantine Zone.

49 Archival pictures of a captive two meter ARACHNID WARRIOR pacing in its cage. Wary SCIENTISTS keep their distance as a COW is fed to the bug.

OFFICIAL VOICE
Too late they realized that Dantana had already been chosen by other colonists -- Arachnids!

50 Now body parts litter the ruined streets of Port Joe Smith.

OFFICIAL VOICE
The council asks future colonists to obey all official Federal warnings. Would you like to know more?

51 EXT CAMP CURRIE -- PARADE GROUND -- DAY -- SERGEANT ZIM

astoundingly fit at 40, greets sixty RECRUITS, all of them in their early 20s, including Johnny, BRECKINRIDGE, DJANA'D, KATRINA McINTIRE, ACE LEVY, SHUJUMI, and KITTEN SMITH.

ZIM
The problem with you is that none of you are good enough the way you are. Hands at your side!

WHACK! Zim hits the offender's hand with a small baton.

ZIM
I am your senior drill instructor, Career Sergeant Zim. Chin up!
(WHACK!)
Suck in that gut! Feet together!
(WHACK! WHACK!)
TO THINK THIS HAD TO HAPPEN TO ME! What a bunch of apes. No strike that. You don't rate that good... In my whole life I've never seen such a disgraceful huddle of momma's spoiled little darlings! You there, EYES FRONT!

Zim gives Kitten Smith the hairy eyeball. Smith cracks up.

ZIM
Do you think I'm funny? Do I make you laugh? Do you think I'm a comedian?

Kitten Smith shakes his head "no", but can't stifle himself.

KITTEN SMITH
Sorry...!

ZIM
The first and last words out of your stinking hole will be "sir". Do you get me?

KITTEN SMITH
Sir, sorry...sir

ZIM
See the armory? Run round it!

Kitten Smith squints. Out in the distance, a tiny building. Zim smacks him on the leg with his baton.

KITTEN SMITH
YEOW!

ZIM
RUN, I SAID. Bronski, keep pace!

BRONSKI
Yes, sir!

Kitten Smith runs. Big CORPORAL BRONSKI, 28, takes out after him, laying a baton across his backside every time he slows. Zim points to a transporter near the front gate.

ZIM
Anytime you think I'm being too tough, anytime you think I'm being unfair... QUIT! Sign the 1240/A form, grab your gear and take a stroll down "Washout Lane". Get me?

JOHNNY ET AL
Sir, yes, sir!

ZIM
I wonder if there's a handful of guts in the whole bunch. Who thinks they've got what it takes to knock me down?

Breckinridge, a big guy from the farm planet, steps forward.

BRECKINRIDGE
Sir, I guess maybe I do, sir.

Zim crooks a finger at him. Breckinridge charges. Zim knocks him flat. Breckinridge holds his arm, twisted now.

ZIM
You alright, Breckinridge?

BRECKINRIDGE
Sir, yes, sir. It's my arm. I think it's broken, sir.

A MEDIC charges up, checks Breckinridge's arm.

MEDIC
Clean break... Doc'll have you back on active before chow.

ZIM
Good. Who's next?

Just then, a new recruit joins the group from across the parade ground. Johnny stares, surprised. It's Dizzy.

DIZZY
Sir, recruit Flores, reporting for duty, sir.

She snaps Zim a salute and hands him her orders.

ZIM
You specifically requested transfer from Fort Cronkite to this training group...

Dizzy grins self-consciously at Johnny.

DIZZY
Sir, I heard it was the best, sir!

ZIM
It is the best... BUT WHAT MAKES YOU THINK YOU'RE GOOD ENOUGH?

Dizzy grins, assumes a fighting stance. Zim looks her over. Dizzy attacks Zim, counters his counter, dances out of range.

DJANA'D
Lookit her go!

Now Zim attacks. Dizzy flip kicks Zim in the head.

KATRINA
That's the kinda of girl who makes squad leader.

ACE
Hey, hey, hey... that's my job your talkin about.

Johnny and Ace size each other up. Zim sweeps Dizzy's legs, puts a knee in her throat. Dizzy passes out.

ZIM
MEDIC!

52 INT MESS HALL -- DAY -- THE RECRUITS

stand in a line for chow. Breckinridge wears a CLEAR PLASTIC MEDI-CAST on his injured arm. He has trouble handling his tray.

BRECKINRIDGE
I'd like to wring that bastard's neck...!

KATRINA
Improper Attitude! They kick you out for talking like that...

KITTEN SMITH
Thats why they got Washout Lane...

Ace cuts into the front of the mess line.

ACE
Yeah. You either got what it takes or you don't.

DJANA'D
Hey, who made it your turn?

ACE
At ease, soldier. It's all the same muck.

JOHNNY
Get in line like everyone else, Ace.

Silence. There could be a fight. Zim, standing nearby, watches with interest.

ACE
You got some guts for a rich kid... I guess you and me could be buddies. Whad'ya say?

JOHNNY
I'm honored...

ACE
Hey, don't laugh. Everyone oughta have a friend like me!

Ace makes a big friendly show of trading places with Johnny.

BRECKINRIDGE
Come on, Ace, back of the line! Back of the line!

Now everyone's laughing, pushing Ace to his place at the back of the line. Johnny gets his grub. Dizzy, sporting a black eye from her tussle with Zim, comes up with her tray.

DIZZY
Wanna sit together?

JOHNNY
No thanks, Diz...

DIZZY
What's your malfunction, Rico?

JOHNNY
You are. I joined up to get out on my own, and you had to tag along.

DIZZY
What? You think I joined the Mobile Infantry because of you?

JOHNNY
You saying you didn't?

Johnny turns away. Dizzy watches him go, hurt.

53 EXT OBSTACLE COURSE -- DAY -- THE RECRUITS

tumble the difficult course with MORITA SMARTRIFLES and FIELD PACKS. Djana'd misses a jump and goes down hard.

ZIM
WHY IS THAT WEAPON ON THE GROUND? YOUR WEAPON IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN YOU ARE! PICK IT UP! PICK IT UP!

At the head of the pack, breathing hard, Johnny and Ace race.

ACE
What makes you think... you'll make... squad leader, Rico?

JOHNNY
Something... I've got... you don't!

ACE
You rich kids... you're all the same!

JOHNNY
It isn't about that... It's about who's best...!

They come to a trap, prepare to leap.

DIZZY
Coming through!

Dizzy jumps over them from behind. Johnny and Ace tumble into the mud.

54 EXT COMBAT KNIFE PRACTICE -- DAY -- THE RECRUITS

throw knives at a line of targets. Johnny has the hang of it and hits his target consistently. Ace has a harder time.

ACE
Sir, I don't understand who needs a knife in a nuke fight anyway... All you gotta do is push a button, sir!

Zim indicates a narrow wooden post.

ZIM
Put your hand on that post, trooper.

Ace obeys. Zim throws, sticks his hand to the post.

ACE
AWK!

ZIM
The enemy cannot push a button if you disable his hand. MEDIC!

Zim pulls the knife out of Ace's hand. MEDICS arrive and go to work on Ace's hand.

55 INT SHOWERS -- NIGHT -- THE RECRUITS

shower. Ace wears a CLEAR PLASTIC MEDI-MITT on his hand.

KITTEN SMITH
We have one thing in common. We were all stupid enough to sign up for Mobile Infantry. What's your excuse, Breckinridge?

BRECKINRIDGE
Well, my family's all farmers. I hate farming. Mobile Infantry's pure picnic by comparison.

KITTEN SMITH
Alright, so they grow'em big and dumb on the farm planet... Djana'd?

DJANA'D
I'm going in for politics. You know you gotta be a citizen for that... so here I am.

KITTEN SMITH
Oh, you want Responsibility...! Com'on, Shujumi. Keep it going...

SHUJUMI
I got into Harvard... but my dad says forget it, it's gonna cost an arm and a leg, you know? If I serve, the Federation pays my way.

KATRINA
I want to be a mom. It's easier to get a license if you've served.

ACE
I'm going career... officer's training... all the way.

Dizzy enters and begins to dress down.

KITTEN SMITH
A future Sky Marshal. Your turn, Rico!

JOHNNY
Aw, who asked you to be so nosey?

Dizzy joins them in the shower.

KITTEN SMITH
Me, I'm gonna be a writer, and a writer's got a right to be nosey. Flores, you know Rico from Buenos Aires... What's his story?

DIZZY
Oh, he's here because of a girl.

This is greeted by laughter and catcalls. Johnny glares at Dizzy and exits. Kitten Smith regards Dizzy.

KITTEN SMITH
You?

Dizzy just smiles enigmatically and gets wet under the shower.

56 INT BARRACKS -- NIGHT -- INTO CAMERA -- JOHNNY

pans the barracks with an unseen handcam, neat bunks in a row, each with its own READING STATION, RECRUITS lounging around in their skivvies. Ace plays scales on a BATTERED VIOLIN.

JOHNNY
This is where we live... it's not much, but it's home. Right there, that's my bunk where I dream about you every night...

The camera pans to explore further, finds Katrina, Kitten Smith, Shujumi and Breckinridge, all crowding in to moon the camera. Ace plays a snake dance riff on his violin.

JOHNNY
Hey, do you mind?

Johnny moves the camera away from the guys.

JOHNNY
Boot's pretty tough, and sometimes I think I won't make it, but then I think about what you're doing and I try harder. Who knows? They might even make me squad leader.

The barracks lights go out. Taps plays over the public address. Johnny lowers his voice.

JOHNNY
Uh-oh, I gotta pack it in. Bye! Write me! And remember...

Behind him, sappy violin and someone begins to sing, belcanto.

KATRINA
I love you truly, so truly, dear...!

Katrina, the singer, and other recruits surround Johnny, harmonizing.

PULLBACK TO REVEAL:

57 INT TERESHKOVA FLEET ACADEMY -- DAY -- CARMEN

watches the end of Johnny's letter. Katrina continues to sing.

KATRINA
Our love will grow, dear, year by year...

JOHNNY
Bye! Write me! I'm gonna kill you guys!

The letter ends. Carmen smiles. A BALD CADET smacks her on the arm as she runs by in a sleek blue pressure suit.

BALD CADET
Orbit in five, Ibanez! First one there gets to fly!

Grinning, Carmen grabs her duffel, takes off after her.

58 INT BOARDING CORRIDOR -- DAY -- CARMEN

and the bald cadet race for the hatch past other recruits.

59 INT FLEET TRAINER -- DAY CYCLE -- CARMEN

gets there first, jumps into the pilot seat. The Bald Pilot takes second seat.

CARMEN
Locking it down!

Two LATE CADETS duck in through the closing hatch door.

LATE CADET
Oh no, not Ibanez again. She's crazy!

CARMEN
Ready, steady...

She hits the main booster.

60 EXT LUNAR ORBIT -- THE FLEET TRAINER

streaks upward from the lunar floor past orbiting training platforms where CADETS in brightly colored pressure suits float against the Earth which hangs beyond the horizon.

CARMEN (O.S.)
...GO!

61 INT FLEET TRAINER -- LUNAR ORBIT -- CARMEN

blasts past a DESTROYER orbiting in dock, zips between CORVETTES and other slower fleet traffic in the crowded space lanes of Luna. The two late cadets are terrified.

BALD CADET
How come you're in such a good mood?

CARMEN
'Cause today I get to fly that!

She points. A great STARSHIP is revealed where it hangs at dock, the Rodger Young.

62 INT RODGER YOUNG -- COMMAND AND CONTROL -- CARMEN

arrives on the bridge, dark, cramped, all-business. She salutes the instructor, CAPTAIN DELADIER, 40s.

CARMEN
Pilot Trainee Ibanez reporting for duty, ma'am.

DELADIER
Take the number two chair, Ibanez. Follow all instructions of your supervisor.

CARMEN
Yes, ma'am!

Carmen turns for her station, but stops in her tracks. Her supervisor is Zander Barcalow, now a 2nd Lieutenant.

CARMEN
Hey! What're you doing here?

ZANDER
I'm the guy who's gonna teach you to fly this crate.

Carmen logs on. The ship recognizes her as a pilot trainee.

CARMEN
Assistant Instructor... You must be some kind of hot stick. Should I call you "sir"?

ZANDER
Only when I give you an order.

DELADIER
Prepare for departure.

Carmen and Zander go to work.

CARMEN
It's amazing, us running into each other like this. Maybe it's fate.

ZANDER
Maybe not. I heard about this crazy girl coming through the academy, solid math, a little wild on the stick, but a natural. When it turned out it was you, I made sure we'd run into each other...

DELADIER
Alright, take'er out, Ibanez.

CARMEN
Yes, ma'am.

All eyes are on Carmen as she grabs the stick. The ship shudders under her hand. She winks at Zander.

CARMEN
In simulation, my supervisors could never keep up.

ZANDER
This isn't simulation anymore. Take'er out easy, cadet.

CARMEN
Oh, yes, sir. Vector?

ZANDER
Twenty-five by five, roll seven. And don't exceed port speed.

Carmen rocks the stick, and the view from the bridge spins smoothly away from the dense orbiting yards of Luna toward the outer system.

CARMEN
Or what...?

ZANDER
They revoke your flight status...
and mine.

CARMEN
Oh... your career is in my
hands...

Carmen jogs nimbly around several lumbering freighters. Zander keeps his cool, tense, but nonetheless impressed.

DELADIER
Steady as she goes, number two.
Prepare for warp. Number one,
design for Jupiter orbit.

ZANDER
Yes, ma'am. Star drive in
five... four... ready...
steady... go.

Space appears to bend. Zander and Carmen share a smile as they go molecular, stretching impossibly until all we see are STARS.

64 EXT WAR GAMES COURSE -- DAY -- THE RECRUITS

have been divided into a Red Team and a BLUE TEAM. The object is to capture the other team's flag. They carry Moritas modified with a BARREL-MOUNTED "TAG" LASER.

RED and BLUE LASER BEAMS zip across the mock battlefield. A "hit" on a trooper's "TAG VEST" briefly paralyzes the victim. Johnny dives for cover, finds himself sharing it with Dizzy.

KITTEN SMITH
I'm going in! Let's go!

Kitten Smith's team makes a run for the flag with a rifle team. Ace and Katrina open fire from two new hidden Red Team positions, taking Kitten and his team down with a cross fire.

JOHNNY
Man, they're defended... no way
in.

DIZZY
Flip six, three hole.

JOHNNY
What?

DIZZY
Run a flip six, three hole play, and you could score...

Johnny looks at the course in a new way, nods.

JOHNNY
Cover me.

DIZZY
You got it.

Johnny crosses open ground, vaults into the air. Dizzy takes out Breckinridge as he rises to fire. Johnny lands, knocks out Katrina, then Ace. He picks up Ace's fallen Morita.

JOHNNY
Thanks, pal.

65 EXT OBSERVATION TOWER -- DAY -- ZIM AND CORPORAL BRONSKI

watch Johnny firing both Moritas simultaneously and taking out the remaining Red Team defenders. He grabs the Red Team flag and hurls it into the air like a spear.

ZIM
Kid's got some moves...

66 INT BARRACKS -- NIGHT -- THE RECRUITS

have some free time. Johnny makes a big show of polishing the chevrons that designate him as Squad Leader.

KITTEN SMITH
Look at him. Do you think anyone has ever been so pleased with himself?

ACE
Zim hadda choose someone to be his brown nose, I guess.

Johnny shoots him a victorious grin, turns to Dizzy.

JOHNNY
Couldn't've done it without you, Diz. Friends?

Dizzy smiles, shakes.

DIZZY
Friends.

Bronski walks through with the mail.

BRONSKI
Levy... Shujumi... Rico.

Johnny grabs the disk and pops it into the READING STATION attached to his bunk. The Fleet logo appears: APPROVED MESSAGE. Carmen appears, dressed down to skivvies, in quarters aboard the Rodger Young.

CARMEN
Hi, Johnny, I would've written sooner, but they've really got us going here...

Johnny's pals gather for a look.

ACE
Yeow, Rico, you don't deserve that!

JOHNNY
Shhhh...!

CARMEN
They must've made you squad leader by now and if they haven't, tell'em to talk to me...

Johnny holds the up the chevrons victoriously.

JOHNNY
See, all it takes is the love of a good woman...

The image changes abruptly. Now Carmen's wearing a trim blue flight suit. She stands the camera on Rodger Young's gunnery deck. Outside, the rings of Saturn sparkle in bright solar light.

CARMEN
Look at that. Isn't it beautiful? I love it out here...
(she sighs)
And that's also the problem because I think I'm gonna go career. I want a command, Johnny, a ship of my own, and, you know, I don't think that's going to leave a lot of room for you and me.

Johnny is stunned. All the other recruits suddenly seem to have something else to do.

CARMEN
I know that's not what you wanted to hear... but I have to follow my heart. I'm sorry.

Carmen is distracted by a sudden manuever of the ship. A TONE COMMAND sounds over the ship's P.A., "First team to bridge..."

CARMEN
Gotta go... Write me, alright? Write me so I'll know that we'll always be friends.

The Fleet Mail logo appears again: END OF MESSAGE. Johnny shuts it off, turns away darkly. Ace puts a hand on his shoulder.

ACE
Funny how they always want to be friends after they rip your guts out.

JOHNNY
Yeah? Well, it's what I deserve.

ACE
Whad'ya talkin about?

JOHNNY
I joined up for her. I wouldn't even be here if it wasn't for her.

ACE
You made squad leader on your own, and, hey, you still got me to kick around.

67 EXT LIVE FIRE ASSAULT RANGE -- DAY -- THE RECRUITS

remove the tag lasers from their Moritas and insert live POWER MAGS. Above them, Zim paces on a platform.

ZIM
Fun and games are over! Today you are firing live ammunition in a simulated combat environment... so you will exercise EXTREME CARE on my firing line. Do you get me?

RECRUITS
Sir, yes, sir!

ZIM
If you do not hit your target, your target will get you... Move'em out, Rico!

Zim steps into a control booth. Johnny leads the platoon to the start position.

ZIM (P.A.)
Perfect score for this exercise is 300. B company came through last week with 285. I expect you to do better.

WARNING SIRENS sound and the recruits move onto the range. ENEMY TARGET GRUNTS pop up and fire GREEN LASER pulses. The recruits blast them as they appear

Halfway through, a RECRUIT takes a hit. Dizzy has a clear shot at the target, but Breckinridge gets in her way.

DIZZY
Clear my line of fire, Breckinridge!

The target disappears behind a mound. Before the others can react, another target grunt appears and then a second.

JOHNNY
EVERYBODY DOWN!

Recruits kiss dirt with the exception of Shujumi who opens fire. Enemy laser pulses fill the air. Shujumi takes a hit. Johnny and Dizzy knock out the two target grunts.

JOHNNY
Alright, no more screw ups. Diz, take point. Breckinridge, right flank. Djana'd, bring up the rear. Let's move out.

The squad resumes its advance. Breckinridge bangs on his helmet. There's something wrong with his "head up" display. Johnny grows increasingly tense.

JOHNNY
What's the problem...?

BRECKINRIDGE
It's my helmet...!

DJANA'D
You're gonna mess up our score...!

JOHNNY
Aw, give it to me...!

Breckinridge takes off his helmet, hands it to Johnny. Djana'd turns on Breckinridge.

DJANA'D
How come when something goes wrong, it's always you, Breckinridge?

That's when Djana'd trips on a loose stone. She fumbles her rifle and it discharges. The round tears the top of Breckinridge's head off. The recruits stare in horror.

JOHNNY
uh... MEDIC!

Zim arrives with Bronski.

ZIM
Rico, you are relieved of squad command.

No one looks at Djana'd, who stands alone sobbing.

69 INT C.O.'S OFFICE -- DAY -- JOHNNY

is marched in before the C.O., 45, braced between Bronski and Zim.

C.O.
Rico, did you give the recruit permission to remove his helmet?

JOHNNY
Sir, yes, sir. Breckinridge reported a helmet malfunction, and I asked him to show it to me, sir.

C.O.
Are you rated to repair the M3 Tactical Helmet, Rico?

JOHNNY
Sir, no, sir.

C.O.
Then why did you order your man to remove his helmet during a live fire exercise?

JOHNNY
Sir, I needed everyone in my squad operational, sir... I... I wanted to win, sir.

C.O.
(sigh)
You disobeyed safety regulation 21-404. You may, of course, demand trial by court martial.

JOHNNY
Sir, no, sir!

Zim looks out the window. Djana'd, dressed for travel in civilian clothes, crying as she heads off down Washout Lane.

C.O.
Sergeant, we've lost two recruits over this incident already... do you think there's any possibility of salvaging this man?

ZIM
Yes, sir, I do.

C.O.
Alright. We'll try administrative punishment.

71 EXT PARADE GROUND -- DAY -- THE RECRUITS

stand with recruits from the other platoons. Johnny is led to a post and strung up as the C.O. reads the charge.

C.O.
For incompetence of command, for failure to abide by safety regulations in a live fire exercise, for negligence which contributed to the death of a teammate...

Zim steps up to Johnny, offers him a red rubber mouthpiece.

ZIM
Bite on this. It helps. I know.

C.O.
...recruit trainee John Rico is sentenced to administrative punishment. Ten lashes.

Johnny takes it in his mouth, stands at the post alone. Corporal Bronski, a big man with an unhappy task, unrolls his whip.

C.O.
You may carry out the sentence.

BRONSKI
One.

CRACK! Johnny's face wrenched by pain, spontaneous tears, a terrible sound stifled by the bright red mouthpiece.

BRONSKI
Two.

CRACK! Again. Dizzy flinches for Johnny.

BRONSKI
Three.

CRACK! Ace, who now wears the chevrons of squad leader, looks away.

BRONSKI
Four.

CRACK! Zim watches without apparent emotion.

BRONSKI
Five.

CRACK! Johnny faints, sagging against his tether.

FADE OUT

72 EXT OUTER SYSTEM -- STARSHIP RODGER YOUNG

cruises past, 600,000 metric tons of star class destroyer, FIGHTERS and LANDING BOATS lining her open hangar deck.

73 INT RODGER YOUNG -- COMMAND AND CONTROL -- CARMEN

works alone on the empty bridge. She yawns. Zander brings coffee for himself and Carmen.

CARMEN
Thanks. You read my mind. Third watch always seems to last forever.

ZANDER
Depends on who you're spending it with.

Zander notices the plot map.

ZANDER
Something wrong... there.

CARMEN
No, I re-plotted the course. It's more efficient this way.

ZANDER
Three weeks aboard a starship and you think you can lick my navs, huh?

CARMEN
Check it.

Zander slides into his chair, runs a check.

ZANDER
You know, I was talking to Captain Deladier, and she said...

CARMEN
Don't change the subject. Am I right?

ZANDER
Well, whad'ya know...

CARMEN
So what'd the captain say?

ZANDER
She thinks we oughta team up officially and crew for her.

CARMEN
You and me, huh?

Zander turns his chair so they are very close.

ZANDER
We're good together, Carmen, way ahead of the curve in every department. I can anticipate you. You know what I want...

CARMEN
No, what do you want?

He notices her coffee cup on the console. The dark liquid is slanting at an unnatural angle in the clear cup.

ZANDER
Look at that...

CARMEN
There's a gravity field out there...

ZANDER
Run a scan.

Carmen activates a grid screen, toggles the display left. The grid screen shows a GROWING DISTORTION.

CARMEN
There...!

Zander sets off the general alarm. Deladier appears on the hot screen, apparantly just out of bed.

DELADIER
Report!

ZANDER
Captain, we are in the path of an unidentified object moving at high speed...!

CARMEN
Looks like an asteroid, ma'am!

DELADIER
In this part of the system?

Out the front windows, only stars, but on the grid screen the curvature has become a vortex.

ZANDER
Impact in 12 seconds...

DELADIER
Emergency evasion!

Deladier disappears from view on the monitor. Carmen brings a NEW PANEL up out of her center console, break a protective glass shield and accesses emergency controls.

73A EXT RODGER YOUNG -- THE RETRO ROCKETS

move into the new position.

73B INT RODGER YOUNG -- COMMAND AND CONTROL -- CARMEN AND ZANDER

watch the grid screen as the vortex deepens.

ZANDER
On my mark... three... two...

The vortex consumes the display and at that moment they look up to see the ASTEROID hurtling toward them through the cockpit windows.

ZANDER
FIRE!

Carmen hits the fire control.

74 EXT SPACE -- RODGER YOUNG -- THE ENGINES

fire and torque the ship down and to the right. The asteroid barely misses the ship, clipping the COMMUNICATIONS TOWER which rips a gash in the hull as it shears away.

74A INT RODGER YOUNG -- COMMUNICATIONS -- THE CEILING

is torn away in several sections. TECH CREW and a COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER are sucked away into space.

75 INT RODGER YOUNG -- COMMAND AND CONTROL -- DELADIER

and other BRIDGE CREW come on duty. Deladier checks ship damage on a monitor that displays a wire frame representation of the Rodger Young.

DELADIER
Close compartment 21.

Zander executes the command.

77 INT RODGER YOUNG -- COMMUNICATIONS -- A SCREAMING ENGINEER

clings to the door jamb as the compartment closes, loses his grip, and flies off into the void of space.

78 INT RODGER YOUNG -- COMMAND AND CONTROL -- DELADIER

cooly continues with emergency proceedures as Deladier and other BRIDGE CREW come on duty.

DELADIER
Where'd it come from?

Zander's tracks a trajectory analysis of the asteroid through a series of star charts, showing its point of origin on a map labled "ARACHNID QUARANTINE ZONE".

ZANDER
It came out of the Arachnid Quarantine Zone, ma'am.

DELADIER
Number 4, contact Fleet and tell'em there's a loose asteroid headed their way...

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER
Communications are down, ma'am... They're gone.

Deladier studies damage readouts over the Engineering Officer's shoulder.

DELADIER
Damage assessment.

ENGINEERING OFFICER
Hull's compromised. We're lucky to be alive, ma'am.

DELADIER
Luck didn't have anything to do with it. We have a helluva flight team.

Carmen and Zander grin at each other.

79 INT BARRACK'S -- DAY -- JOHNNY

wears his civilian clothes, packs as the other recruits get ready for the day's training. No one says anything. He moves stiffly, careful of his back.

DIZZY
It stinks, you goin.

JOHNNY
Yeah, well, the Mobile Infantry'll just have to get along without me.

DIZZY
I don't get it. You took your licks... If they didn't want you, they woulda kicked you out.

JOHNNY
Hey, I joined up for the wrong reasons, I got a guy killed... I figure that proves I don't have what it takes.

Corporal Bronski leans in, impassive.

BRONSKI
Your call's going through, Rico. Take it there.

A nearby VU-PHONE lights up. The screen flashes: **RINGING.** His mother appears when she picks up on the other end.

MOTHER
Hello... Oh, Johnny...!

JOHNNY
Hi, mom.

MOTHER
Bill... pick up... it's Johnny!

The screen splits as Johnny's father activates an extension.

FATHER
Johnny! Where's your uniform...?

Johnny's mother makes a face to shut him up.

FATHER
It's just good to hear from you, son. How are you?

JOHNNY
It's not really working out for me here, dad. I was thinking... I was hoping it would be alright if I came home.

MOTHER
Of course! You should come home immediately!

JOHNNY
I'm sorry... I've been an idiot...

FATHER
Don't talk like that. Just come home.

MOTHER
I'll fix your favorite dinner.

FATHER
Yeah! We'll talk it out, we'll have a glass of wine... and... well, we love you, son.

The sky outside darkens perceptively. Johnny's mother looks out the window.

MOTHER
Oh, my, what's that?

FATHER
Looks like rain.

MOTHER
This time of year...?

The transmission ends abruptly. A phone company logo appears: TRANSMISSION TERMINATED.

VU-PHONE VOICE
Your transmission has been terminated due to atmospheric interference. Please try your call again later.

Johnny zips his duffel, hefts it gingerly over his shoulder.

JOHNNY
Well, see ya.

DIZZY
You take the stroll down Washout Lane, you're only proving one thing, Johnny.

JOHNNY
What's that, Diz?

DIZZY
You don't have what it takes to be a citizen!

Dizzy turns on her heel and marches away.

81 EXT PARADE GROUND -- DAY -- JOHNNY

walks alone, sad. Out across the parade ground he sees the recruits tumble the obstacle course.

82 EXT WASHOUT LANE -- DAY -- JOHNNY

reaches the little white fence that leads to the transporter. He turns back for one last look and notices people running to the Communications shack. Kitten Smith runs by.

JOHNNY
Hey, Kitten, what's going on?

KITTEN SMITH
It's war!

83 EXT COMMUNICATIONS -- DAY -- JOHNNY

joins others to see what's on the Federal Net. Recruits, non-coms, and officers gather without any sense of military decorum. People cry openly, among them Corporal Bronski.

OFFICIAL VOICE
...early estimates. Millions dead, a city in ruins...

On screen, the smoldering ruins of a huge city.

JOHNNY
Oh, jeez, is that Geneva?

Now star charts show the path of a meteor.

OFFICIAL VOICE
Trajectory analysis shows that the meteor derived from here, near Klendathu, in the Arachnid's home system...

KATRINA
Goddam bugs whacked us, Johnny.

More images of urban desolation and destruction.

OFFICIAL VOICE
Nothing lives in what was once called the Latin Paradise... Buenos Aires has been wiped off the Earth.

Johnny is horrified. Dizzy is suddenly standing next to him.

DIZZY
Aw, Johnny... that's us... it's home.

84 INT C.O.'S OFFICE -- DAY -- STAFF OFFICERS

crowd around a monitor to watch the grim news unfold. The C.O. argues with Zim at his desk.

OFFICIAL VOICE
The Federal Council met moments ago and voted unanimously for mobilization to destroy the Arachnid threat.

ZIM
I'm serious, sir. I'll go anywhere. I want combat.

Johnny enters, jaw set, determined, heads for the C.O.'s desk.

C.O.
Forget it, Zim. We're gonna need you here. The only way you'll get a combat assignment is if you bust yourself to private. Get me?

ZIM
Yes, sir, I get you.

C.O.
What can I do for you, Rico?

JOHNNY
Sir, I wish to reconsider my request to drop out, sir.

C.O.
Sorry, son. No can do. You signed the 1240/A. It wouldn't be legal.

JOHNNY
Sir, I know it was wrong. I didn't learn from one mistake and I made another, sir.
(then)
Sir, my family... my whole family was in Buenos Aires, sir.

Zim picks up Johnny's resignation form off the C.O.'s desk.

ZIM
This your signature, Rico?

JOHNNY
Sir, yes it is, sir.

ZIM
Doesn't look like it to me.

Zim gives the C.O. a look. The C.O. shrugs, turns away, watching the news of coming war. Zim tears up the form.

ZIM
Get outa here, private.

85 FROM THE FEDERAL NET -- HUMANKIND GOES TO WAR!

Actual pictures of Buenos Aires: The towering FEDERAL EAGLE, charred and cracked, standing lone sentinal over the ruins of a smoldering city. Stunned survivors wander broken streets, people wail, but here and there kids play tag in the rubble.

OFFICIAL VOICE
Out of the ashes of Buenos Aires comes first sorrow, then ANGER!

ANGRY PERSON
The only good bug is a dead bug!

OFFICIAL VOICE
Would you like to know more?

86 LEADERSHIP -- SKY MARSHALL ANNOUNCES OFFENSIVE!

SKY MARSHALL DIENES, 72, addresses the FEDERAL COUNCIL.

SKY MARSHALL DIENES
We are a generation commanded by fate to defend humankind! We must meet the threat with our valor, our blood, with our very lives, to insure that human civilization, not insect, dominates this galaxy now and always.

The council rises to its feet for a standing ovation.

OFFICIAL VOICE
Sky Marshall Dienes announces plans for an offensive against Klendathu, source of the bug meteor that destroyed Buenos Aires.

87 SCIENCE GOES TO WAR -- KNOW YOUR FOE!

FEDERAL SCIENTISTS observe a CAPTIVE ARACHNID WARRIOR.

OFFICIAL VOICE
Everyday Federal scientists are looking for new ways to kill bugs...

SCIENTIST
Your basic Arachnid warrior isn't too smart, but you can blow a limb off...

One scientist turns to camera. It's Carl, but there's something different about him that speaks of... authority. Carl uses a pulse gun to blow the bug's legs off.

CARL
...and it's still 86% combat effective. But here's a tip: Aim for the nerve stem here and put it down for good.

Carl fires again. The bug kicks and squeals as it dies.

OFFICIAL VOICE
Would you like to know more?

88 HOME FRONT -- KIDS KILL BUGS AND MOM IS GLAD!

MOM smiles as her CUTE KIDS stomp insects in the garden.

OFFICIAL VOICE
Everyone's doing their share. Are you? The war effort needs your effort at work, at home, in your community. Would you like to know more?

89 LIVE BROADCAST -- AQZ -- FLEET BATTLE STATION TICONDEROGA

is a sprawling prefab structure covering several square kilometers of space where STARSHIPS are stacked in berths. Super title: COUNTDOWN TO VICTORY.

OFFICIAL VOICE
We now break net and take you live to Fleet Battle Station Ticonderoga deep inside the Arachnid Quarantine Zone.

90 INT BATTLE STATION -- NIGHT CYCLE -- THE CAMERA

follows the Net Correspondent as he works a corridor crowded with MOBILE INFANTRY and FLEET PERSONNEL.

NET CORRESPONDENT
No one here in the AQZ knows exactly when the invasion of Klendathu will occur, but everyone's talking about it, and the talk says tomorrow!

Newly minted cap troopers Johnny, Dizzy, Ace and Kitten Smith happen along.

NET CORRESPONDENT
Here's a bunch of M.I. kids who look like they eat bugs for lunch!

DIZZY
Yum, yum yum...!

NET CORRESPONDENT
So, Corporal, you're not too worried about fighting the Arachnids...?

ACE
Hey, shoot a nuke down a bug hole, lotta dead bugs, am I right?

KITTEN SMITH
I just hope it's not over before we get in it!

NET CORRESPONDENT
Some say the bugs were provoked by the intrusion of humans into their natural habitat, that a "live and let live" policy is preferable to war with the bugs...

JOHNNY
Yeah, well, I'm from Buenos Aires, and I say kill'em all!

91 INT RECREATION DECK -- NIGHT CYCLE -- JOHNNY

and his friends enter a crowded bar adjacent a laser tattoo parlor.

ACE
Hey, we oughta get tattoos! Let's all get cut together.

JOHNNY
What do I want with a scar?

DIZZY
What, your skin's too pretty? C'mon, everyone's doing it!

CARMEN (V.O.)
Hey! Johnny! Johnny Rico!

Johnny looks up and sees Carmen. She looks great in uniform with the hat and the lieutenant's bars on her shoulders.

JOHNNY
Carmen...?

Johnny remembers himself, snaps to attention, salutes. Dizzy and the others follow suit. Carmen salutes back, sheepish.

CARMEN
Oh... at ease. Guess I oughta lose the hat when I'm off duty.

Dizzy, disgusted, turns back to Ace and Kitten Smith. Carmen tucks her hat under her arm.

JOHNNY
My mother was right about you... You look great in a uniform.

CARMEN
You look pretty good yourself.

JOHNNY
Whad'ya hear? Know about anyone made it out of B.A. alive?

Carmen shakes her head.

CARMEN
Most of the time I can forget about it... like it happened to someone else... then it hits me and I can't stop crying.

JOHNNY
Well, we're still alive. You gotta be happy about that.

CARMEN
You don't look very happy to see me.

JOHNNY
Should I be?

CARMEN
Johnny... It's different now. We're at war... I think what I did was probably the best thing for both of us.

Zander leaves a group of FLEET OFFICERS to join them. He's a little drunk.

ZANDER
Everything copasetic, Lieutenant?

CARMEN
Zander, you remember Johnny? Zander and I are a flight team now.

ZANDER
Best in the Fleet!

JOHNNY
Oh, this is the part that's best for both of us. Well, don't do me anymore favors.

Johnny turns to leave.

CARMEN
Johnny, wait...

ZANDER
Forget it, Ensign. He's Mobile Infantry. When you're trained to kill, it doesn't pay to be polite.

Johnny turns back to face Zander.

JOHNNY
You got something to say about the Mobile Infantry?

ZANDER
You heard me. Wanna make something out of it, private?

JOHNNY
Not with an officer, no, sir. The M.I. doesn't mint stupid cap troopers.

Everyone can see what's about to happen. A circle is forming, Fleet on one side, Mobile Infantry on the other.

ZANDER
Let's disregard rank... Everybody hear that? Rank is not an issue here.

CARMEN
Zander, please... don't do this...!

Zander takes off his hat.

ZANDER
Hey, com'on, ready, steady, go... right?

WHAM! Johnny punches him right in the nose. Zander goes down, bleeding, but he's up in a moment, and now he's pissed.

Zander flips Johnny onto a table, pounding him with his fist. Johnny kicks Zander, knocking him back, and he's on his feet ready to kill Zander when Ace and Kitten Smith grab Johnny.

ACE
Whoa, easy there, buddy...

Zander staggers to his feet, ready to fight, but Carmen and other Fleet Officers pull him back. Carmen leaves with Zander. Dizzy, for her part, couldn't be happier.

DIZZY
Forget it, Johnny. Mobile Infantry and Fleet don't mix...

92 INT LASER PARLOR -- NIGHT CYCLE -- JOHNNY

grinds his teeth as a laser mounted on a robot arm finishes slicing an intricate pattern into his arm.

JOHNNY
Aw, God, that hurts...!

Dizzy, Ace, and Kitten Smith watch, grinning, passing a bottle. Ace pours booze directly on the fresh wound.

ACE
No, this hurts.

JOHNNY
YAAAAAAAAAA!

KITTEN SMITH
Well, here's to it! We're gonna fight, and we're gonna win!

They put their arms side by side. Each has a similar scar, lightning bolts on a shield and the words: DEATH FROM ABOVE.

ACE
Mobile Infantry rules!

93 EXT KLENDATHU -- FROM SPACE -- FLEET STARSHIPS

of every class maneuver in tight orbit around the orange planet. The "Mobile Infantry Anthem" plays like Holst, pounding and relentless. The invasion has begun!

96 INT BULL RUN -- DROP HANGAR -- JOHNNY

and the other troopers run to DROP SHIPS. KLAXONS sound. Dizzy carries the platoon's COMMUNICATIONS PACKAGE.

P.A. **(O.S.)**
This is the Captain speaking.
All personnel prepare for drop.
We are at D minus three and
counting.

97 INT DROP SHIP -- JOHNNY

and the others lock themselves into G-racks.

LT. WILLY
We're going in with the first
wave... means more bugs for us
to kill. Smash the entire area,
kill anything with more'n a
couple legs, and don't any of you
loafers come back aboard with
unexpended ammo. Get me?

JOHNNY ET AL
Yes, sir!

The drop ship bumps and booms towards its launch position. Johnny looks at the grim faces of his companions. Kitten Smith has the shakes.

LT. WILLY
Remember your training, and
you'll make it back alive.

FIRE CONTROL **(O.S.)**
Five seconds...

Sweat rolls down Johnny's face. Dizzy gives him "thumbs up". The drop ship launches, WHAM!

98 EXT SPACE -- KLENDATHU ORBIT -- DROP SHIPS

stream toward Klendathu from the Bull Run. We move down the line past Mannerheim, Dauntless, George Marshall, and Yamamoto to the Rodger Young as they drop their troops.

99 INT RODGER YOUNG -- COMMAND AND CONTROL -- CARMEN

holds the Rodger Young in tight maneuver. Suddenly, a burst of BLUE BUG PLASMA rips past the starboard bow.

CARMEN
Plasma, ma'am... from the planet.

DELADIER
Bug batteries... According to Military Intelligence, it'll be random and light. Drop status?

ZANDER
Drop is 35% complete, ma'am.

Two more bursts of bug plasma streaks past.

DELADIER
Steady as she goes, Number 2.

101 INT DROP SHIP -- NIGHT -- JOHNNY

and the other cap troopers fight terrifying g-forces as the boat drops.

GUIDANCE COMPUTER (V.O.)
...surface in twenty-five seconds... LZ has been identified... beacon is in place...

102 INT RODGER YOUNG -- COMMAND AND CONTROL -- CARMEN

watches nervously as deadly bursts of bug plasma fill the heavens around the battle group. Below, the surface of Klendathu fairly bristles with outgoing defensive fire.

DELADIER
This isn't random or light. Someone made a mistake...!

ZANDER
That's it, we're empty, ma'am!

Out the front screens, a blast from below hits the George Marshall amidships and it reels into the Yamamoto. Both starships begin to burn.

DELADIER
Someone made a big goddam mistake! Break for high orbit, Number 2!

Carmen dodges past burning ships, avoids collision with Dauntless, and then KA-WHAM! they're hit. Carmen flies out of her station and into CAMERA hard.

104 INT DROP SHIP -- NIGHT -- JOHNNY

and the other cap troopers brace for landing.

GUIDANCE COMPUTER (V.O.)
...surface in three... two... one...

105 EXT KLENDATHU -- NIGHT -- THE SKY

is lit by outgoing bug plasma. FOUR DROP SHIPS plummet down out of the cloud layer, firing retros to slow their decent. A PLASMA BURST blows one drop ship out of the sky.

Three drops ships land and the front ramps blow open. Johnny and his platoon pound out of the drop ship, falling in with PLATOONS from the other two drop ships.

JOHNNY'S POV is filled with the FLASH PULSE of bug batteries, screaming voices on the com, concussions shaking the ground. Lt. Willy uses hand signals to direct his platoon up a hill.

The platoon splits into two parts. Johnny's group follows Lt. Willy across open ground to the next available cover.

Ahead two huge PLASMA BUGS lumber across the battlefield. These are insects on a massive scale, thirty meters high and they grow even larger as they come into position, their bulging abdomins tilting toward the sky, glowing BLUE as they swell at the behest of a violent internal chemical reaction.

LIEUTENANT WILLY
Two targets... Nuke'em!

Johnny and Ace hit the dirt, assuming firing position. The designated Troopers assemble TACTICAL NUKES, fitting WARHEADS onto FINNED PROPELLANT UNITS. Once activated, the nukes make a distinctive HIGH-PITCHED SQUEAL. Special weapon troopers put loaded LAUNCHERS in the hands of the shooters.

They load them into launchers and fire them out across the battlefield where they hit WOMP! WOMP! WOMP! FORCE RINGS emanate in concentric circles from blinding NUCLEAR BUBBLES.

LT. WILLY
Good job! Move up!

The platoon moves up to a new position behind an outdropping of rock.

LT. WILLY
Two squads to the left! Two squads follow me!

Suddenly, a WARRIOR pounces on Lieutenant Willy, killing him with its attack claws.

WILLY
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!

Johnny and Ace open fire, backing away. Pulse rounds tear it apart, bug guts gushing. Now comes a horde of deadly ARACHNID WARRIORS.

KITTEN SMITH
HERE THEY COME...!

DIZZY
Ace, what're we doing?

ACE
I uh... uh...

Ace can't make up his mind. Johnny sees Ace's indecision, opens fire. Dizzy joins in and the others open fire simultaneously.

The whole area goes white hot in the magnesium flash of twenty Moritas. Shujumi is charged with fear, advancing, closing with the enemy.

SHUJUMI
YOU WANT SOME? HERE'S SOME! COM'ON!

JOHNNY
FALL BACK, 'JUMI!

Shujumi can't hear. A warrior finds him, rips his leg off, hurls him back into the waiting jaws of the oncoming bugs.

SHUJUMI
AAAAAAAAAAAAAA!

He fights, screaming. Warriors pounce on him. Body parts fly in the air. Katrina goes white with terror.

KATRINA
We gotta pullback!

The ground breaks open and she loses her footing. A Warrior comes out of the ground and drags her back into the bug hole.

KATRINA
AAAAAAAAAAAAAA!

106 EXT KLENDATHU -- NIGHT -- JOHNNY

and the other survivors are on the run. The entire surface of Klendathu seems to be churning with insects as more and more bugs come to the surface to repel the invasion.

DIZZY
It's a general retreat! Back to the boats!

They come to the rear lines where the Net Correspondent and his CAMERAMAN are doing live coverage of the invasion.

NET CORRESPONDENT
We've just landed here on what cap troopers are calling "Big K" with the 6th Mobile Infantry Division. It's an ugly planet, a bug planet, a planet hostile to life as we know iGKKKKK!

The Correspondent is cut in half by a warrior. Johnny blows it away, shouts to the camerman:

JOHNNY
Get out of here... NOW!

He spins the horrified camerman around. Instructions from the net ring in his ear: "Follow them...! Go! Go!" Kitten Smith turns as a WARRIOR overtakes him from behind.

JOHNNY
KITTEN!

Johnny stares in horror as Kitten Smith's head rolls past his feet. Johnny opens up with his Morita. The warrior puts a claw right through Johnny's thigh.

JOHNNY
AAAAAAAAAAAAAA!

The warrior turns on the Cameraman, jaws closing on him, cutting his flesh.

CAMERAMAN
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!

Johnny brings the muzzle of the Morita gun under the warrior's nerve stem, pumps an H.E. round into the bug and SPLAT! blows its head apart.

Johnny looks down at the terrible hole in his leg where bright arterial blood gushes.

JOHNNY
Medic... MEDIC...!

Now two more Arachnid warriors close in on him through the smoke. He fires his pulse rifle empty, crawlings desperately, dragging his useless leg.

The last thing he sees is the WARRIOR charging for the kill.

FADE OUT

107 FROM THE FEDERAL NET -- 100,000 DEAD IN ONE HOUR!

Actual pictures of the battlefield, man and insect lying dead together on the blood drenched plains of Klendathu.

OFFICIAL VOICE
Crisis for Humankind! Fleet officials admit they underestimated the Arachnid's defensive capability. Would you like to know more?

108 SKY MARSHALL RESIGNS!

Retiring Sky Marshall Dienes salutes incoming SKY MARSHALL TEHAT MERU, 75, before a gathering of the Federal Council.

OFFICIAL VOICE
Accepting responsibility for Klendathu, Sky Marshall Dienes resigns. His successor, Sky Marshall Tahat Meru, outlines her new strategy.

SKY MARSHALL MERU
To fight the Bug, we must understand the Bug... We can ill afford another Klendathu.

109 DEBATE: BUGS THAT THINK?

FEDERAL SCIENTISTS display an organizational chart of the Arachnid species topped by a QUESTION MARK.

OFFICIAL VOICE
Federal Scientists struggle to explain the intelligent military actions of the Arachnids...

The screen splits as TWO EXPERTS debate.

EXPERT 1
No no no! When a colony reaches a certain size, 300 generations or something, it gets smarter! Maybe --

EXPERT 2
Insects with intelligence? Have you ever met one? I can't believe I'm hearing --

EXPERT 1
Now wait a moment! Maybe there's a type of bug we haven't seen yet... a leadership caste... some kind of hive brain --

EXPERT 2
Brain Bugs? Frankly, I find the idea of a bug that thinks offensive...!

110 SOMETIMES LOVED ONES DIE FOR A GOOD REASON!

NAMES scroll by designated KIA, WIA, and MIA accordingly.

OFFICIAL VOICE
Families of those who have died or become incapacitated by Federal Service are entitled to benefits! If you see the name of a loved one, please do not call. A Federation official will call you. Would you like to know more?

111 EXT FLEET BATTLE STATION TICONDEROGA -- THE RODGER YOUNG

limps to port, a huge chunk ripped out of its mid-section. Although stable, she flies with 40 degree list.

CARMEN (O.S.)
Ticonderoga, this is Rodger Young requesting approach vector...

TICONDEROGA C&C (O.S.)
Affirmative, Rodger Young... one zero zero niner five two... welcome back.

112 INT RODGER YOUNG -- COMMAND AND CONTROL -- ZANDER AND CARMEN

stare in disbelief at the BATTLE-SCARRED STARSHIPS and BURNT-OUT HULKS that line the docks of Ticonderoga.

ZANDER
Good God... how did this happen?

CARMEN
We thought we were smarter than the bugs.

A bloody bandage covers Carmen's right eye. Zander nods grimly.

114 INT BATTLE STATION TICONDEROGA -- COMMON AREA -- CARMEN

and Zander enter and what they see shocks them. The recreation deck is packed with misery.

DEAD BODIES compete for space with wounded for awaiting triage. MEDICS push a MAIMED TROOPERS past on a gurnies. A BURIAL DETAIL bags bodies and stack them like cordwood.

Survivors watch casualty lists scroll by on a FEDERAL NET TERMINAL.

CARMEN
That's strange... there's almost no wounded at all.

ZANDER
Bugs don't take prisoners.

Carmen looks at the words on the Fed Net terminal: WOULD YOU LIKE TO KNOW MORE? She bites her lip, enters Johnny's name. In an instant, she has the news: RICO, John D. -- KIA.

CARMEN
Oh no.

Tears fill her eyes.

ZANDER
Carmen...?

CARMEN
Excuse me...!

She rushes away. Zander looks at Johnny's name on the screen, shrugs, presses the ERASE button.

117 INT STASIS TANK -- DAY CYCLE -- JOHNNY

floats, suspended in fluid, his skin white as death. His wounds are now mostly scars except for his leg where delicate robotic arms culture layers of new tissue.

A low underwater KNOCKING wakes him. He opens his eyes, turns, and sees Ace and Dizzy outside the tank.

Ace holds up a KIA list, pointing at Johnny's name, laughing: Rico, John D. -- KIA. Their voices are distant and garbled. Dizzy holds up three fingers.

DIZZY
Three more days.

Johnny gives a weak thumbs up. Ace turns to leave. Dizzy kisses the glass, then follows after Ace. Johnny smiles as he rolls over and goes back to sleep.

DISSOLVE TO:

117A EXT SPACE -- TANGO URILLA -- A BATTLE GROUP

consisting of STARSHIPS, their tender, FREIGHTERS and other SUPPLY CRAFT approaches the rust-colored planet.

117B INT TROOP TRANSPORT -- CORRIDOR -- JOHNNY, DIZZY AND ACE

haul their gear along a starship corridor.

JOHNNY
So whad'ya hear about our new unit?

DIZZY
Roughnecks killed more bugs than any other outfit on Big K...

ACE
Yeah, well, I hear their Lieutenant's a real nutbuster...

118 INT TROOP TRANSPORT -- READY ROOM -- JOHNNY, DIZZY AND ACE

enter the ready room where a collection of combat-hardened vets, the ROUGHNECKS, check out the newcomers. Johnny sizes up SUGAR WATKINS, 26, shirtless, wearing the sharp end of a warrior's feeder claw on a chain around his neck.

JOHNNY
Who's top kick?

SUGAR WATKINS
You want the job, huh?

JOHNNY
I wouldn't mind.

CORPORAL BIRDIE, 24, turns, gives Johnny the once over.

BIRDIE
I would.

JOHNNY
Just doing my part.

Dizzy looks her over. She's big, and she's tough.

DIZZY
Where you been besides Big K?

BIRDIE
Outer rings. Zegema Beach.

JOHNNY
I always wanted to go to Zegema Beach.

SUGAR WATKINS
Good luck. It's not there anymore.

ACE
So I hear your Lieutenant is a real nutbuster.

Birdie belts him, and Ace goes down.

BIRDIE
No one talks about the Lieutenant that way. He saved my life!

Birdie offers a hand and hauls Ace to his feet.

SUGAR WATKINS
Mine, too.

OTHER ROUGHNECKS
Same for me... me, too...

Birdie turns to Johnny.

BIRDIE
Who do you think saved your ass?

This is news to Johnny.

ACE
Well, he sounds like he's quite a guy.

SERGEANT GILLESPIE, 28, steps into the room.

GILLESPIE
Attention!

Everyone snaps to. Johnny and Dizzy are shocked when it is Jean Rasczak who enters wearing a STEEL PROSTHETIC HAND. He nods briefly to his old students, then gets down to business.

RASCZAK
This is for you new people. I only have one rule. Everyone fights. No one quits. If you don't do your job, I'll shoot you. Do you get me?

JOHNNY, DIZZY AND ACE
We get you, sir!

RASCZAK
Welcome to the Roughnecks.

BIRDIE
Rasczak's Roughnecks!

The Roughnecks cheer although it comes out like a growl.

RASCZAK
Save it. There's a new Sky Marshall and a new plan. We're gonna clean out the systems outlying Klendathu one planet at a time. Tomorrow we hit Tango Urilla. After Fleet glasses the planet, M.I. mops up.

119 EXT TANGO URILLA -- BADLANDS -- DAY -- BUG WARRIORS

swarm across a stark, inhospitable surface. A territorial fight breaks out between TWO WARRIORS. The dominant warrior looks up at a distant sound.

A FORMATION OF TAC FIGHTERS screams down from high orbit and a white hot nuclear firestorm consumes the landscape. Screaming bugs twist and kick when the HEAT WAVE hits.

Ash turns the sky red, and then, out of the smoke, come Rasczak and his Roughnecks.

RASCZAK
Spread out. Fire teams. When you locate a bug hole, nuke it!

BIRDIE
Watkins, shake out Flores and Rico... Levy, you're with me.

Ace grins at his buddies head off with Sugar Watkins.

120 EXT TANGO URILLA -- BADLANDS -- DAY -- SUGAR WATKINS

leads Dizzy, Johnny and a SPECIAL WEAPONS GRUNT. A warrior mounts a ridge in front of them. They open fire, and it retreats.

They pound up the ridge, firing at the retreating bug. First one leg is blown off and then another. The warrior can only crawl in a circle. They advance, firing until it collapses.

Sugar Watkins bends down to look the dying bug in the eye... it lurches forward, still alive. Sugar opens up point blank, cursing.

SUGAR WATKINS
...creepy crawly, fungus suckin, puss lovin, sack of maggot puke...!

Bug guts fly, drenching the others.

DIZZY
It's dead, Watkins! It's dead!

SUGAR WATKINS
Ain't much to look at after you scrape'em off your boot...

Johnny points at the entrance to the bug tunnel in the canyon beyond where THREE WARRIORS charge up out of the ground to repel the invaders.

JOHNNY
Bug hole, over there!

Dizzy and Sugar Watkins step up beside Johnny and open fire.

SUGAR WATKINS
Nuke it, Rico!

Johnny shoulders the launcher. The Special Weapons Grunt taps Johnny's helmet.

JOHNNY
Fire in the hole.

They dive for cover as the nuke streaks into the hole. The ground "boils" and then a tremendous subterranean EXPLOSION wipes out a network of tunnels, blasting past over their heads. A call comes over the helmet radios.

BIRDIE (O.S.)
Lieutenant, we're under heavy attack at map position M4...

SUGAR WATKINS
Move!

121 EXT TANGO URILLA -- BADLANDS -- CONTINUING -- DAY -- JOHNNY

and his team double time it around a butte revealing flat terrain where Birdie, Ace and her are about to be overrun by warriors in a short canyon bound by sheer cliffs and a long narrow butte.

JOHNNY
Got a little bug problem, ma'am...?

BIRDIE
Aw, stow it, trooper.

The cap troopers let the bugs have it, but the insects keep coming. Suddenly, the ground breaks open and a huge TANKER BUG claws its way up out of the ground behind them. It's shadow falls on Johnny and he turns.

JOHNNY
TANKER!

The tanker bug starts to spray. TWO ROUGHNECKS take a direct chemical hit and melt. Birdie catches some spray and staggers, flailing as her arm melts away.

BIRDIE
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!

The tanker bug tracks her. Johnny goes in for Birdie, throwing her to cover behind a butte. Deadly spray washes past.

JOHNNY
Fall back!

Roughnecks take cover and Johnny's up and running, up the butte. The tanker tracks Johnny with surprising speed and sprays. Johnny flips himself up the side of the butte.

Rasczak and another team of Roughnecks arrive from a new direction and open fire. The Tanker turns its deadly chemical stream on them. They dive for cover.

Johnny leap from the butte onto the tanker's back, unslings his Morita and uses it to blows a hole in the tanker bug's armor.

The tanker bug goes berserk, trying to shake Johnny off. Johnny falls, losing his gun, tumbling, grabs hold of the hole he made in the tanker bug's armor.

Johnny reaches for a GRENADE, pops the cap, and drops it into the hole in the tanker's armor. The tanker bug torques around and Johnny is thrown to the ground.

Johnny rolls to avoid the tanker which continues to spin wildly, climbs to his feet and dives behind rocks. KA-WHAP! The tanker bug is blown in half.

Rasczak comes up to Johnny as he dusts himself off.

RASCZAK
Where'd you learn how to do that, soldier?

JOHNNY
Back in school, sir. Don't you remember? I was captain of the team --

RASCZAK
Rico, I need a corporal. You're it until you're dead or I find someone better.

JOHNNY
Thank you, sir!

Rasczak turns away from Johnny, gives Birdie prosthetic thumbs up as she is carried past by MEDICS.

RASCZAK
Don't worry Birdie, your next arm comes with a factory guarantee!

Dizzy and Ace gather around Johnny, clap him on the back.

DIZZY
Way to go, Corporal!

JOHNNY
I need a squad leader.

ACE
Big K taught me I ain't executive material.

JOHNNY
What about it, Diz?

DIZZY
(a snappy salute)
Looks like I'm your girl, sir!

127 EXT TANGO URILLA -- BASE CAMP -- NIGHT -- CARGO MODULES

are brought forward and Rasczak bangs his steel fist on one of them. Roughnecks look up from their grub. Behind them, FLEET ENGINEERS build a base camp, working beneath huge WORK LIGHTS. PREFAB BARRACKS are being sprung and supplies are unloaded from a RETRIEVAL BOAT.

RASCZAK
I expect the best... and I give the best.

Rasczak kicks open a CARGO MODULE. A BEER KEG rolls out.

RASCZAK
Here's the beer...

Roughnecks cheer and several move in to tap it. Rasczak kicks open a SECOND MODULE.

RASCZAK
...and here's the entertainment!

Inside, MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS, reading materials, a FOOTBALL.

RASCZAK
Have some fun. That's an order!

Rasczak throws the football to Johnny. A game of toss ensues. Roughnecks crowd around the goodie box. Someone comes out with a violin and a bow. Ace grabs for it.

ACE
Hey, hey, hey... that's for me!

Ace tucks the violin under his chin and rips out a military ditty. Other instruments join in. Sugar Watkins approaches Johnny, offers him a beer.

SUGAR WATKINS
Rico... You kill bugs good.

JOHNNY
Thanks.

Several Roughnecks begin to dance.

SUGAR WATKINS
You knew the Lieutenant before the war... What was he like?

JOHNNY
He was a teacher, kinda like he knew it all... He always had this little smile.

SUGAR WATKINS
He don't smile much anymore.

JOHNNY
Must fill your bottle up real quick when your kids get smeared.

More Roughnecks join the dance as Ace picks up the tempo. Dizzy grabs Johnny's arm, tries to pull him into the fun.

DIZZY
Com'on, corporal...

JOHNNY
Nah, I don't do that anymore...

DIZZY
I remember when you used to dance...

JOHNNY
Hey, do I have to pull rank?

DIZZY
Excuse me, sir.

Dizzy heads back to the others. Johnny turns and finds Rasczak regarding him with an odd smile as Ace launches into the next, more melancholic, song.

RASCZAK
You asked me for some advice once, Rico. Want some now?

JOHNNY
Yes, sir...

He points to Dizzy who dances with Sugar Watkins.

RASCZAK
Never pass up a good thing.

Sergeant Gillespie comes up.

GILLESPIE
HQ's on the com...

Rasczak heads away with Gillespie. Johnny grabs a beer and offers it to Sugar Watkins who bows and steps aside. Johnny grins and takes Dizzy by the hand. Ace watches them, puts something extra in the music.

DIZZY
What're you doing after the dance?

130 INT PREFAB SLEEPING UNIT -- NIGHT -- JOHNNY AND DIZZY

are undressing each other, kissing, playing. Dizzy giggles.

JOHNNY
What's so funny?

DIZZY
Oh, you know, the way things work out...

They fall together onto a sleeping bag, making love.

The door pops open. Rasczak stands there. Dizzy pulls the blanket over her.

RASCZAK
Rico?

Johnny manages a salute.

JOHNNY
Yes, sir.

RASCZAK
We're moving out. Headquarters got a distress call from General Owen on Planet P. Get your shit wired and report in ten minutes.

JOHNNY
Yes, sir!

RASCZAK
Who's that with you?

Dizzy shows herself, grinning, embarrassed.

RASCZAK
Report in half an hour.

Rasczak closes the door shut on them, and they fall back into one anothers' arms, laughing.

131 EXT PLANET P -- BAD LANDS -- DAY -- THE ROUGHNECKS

move through canyons of towering wind-carved rock formations. Gillespie carries the communications package. Rasczak and the others hear a noise. They scan the cliffs of the canyon.

Johnny uses BINOCS, sees falling rocks. He looks for the source of the disturbance, catches some movement, but when he goes back to check it out, it's gone.

GILLESPIE
I'm not getting anything from the outpost... Not even a transponder signal.

RASCZAK
Must be these canyons... Go for higher ground, Sergeant.

Gillespie climbs a rock formation to get better reception.

132 EXT CANYON RIM -- CONTINUING -- DAY -- THE ROUGHNECKS

walk in a column far below. Gillespie climbs an outcropping. Something watches from above... A powerful hind LEG comes through frame, followed by the edge of a razor sharp WING that scrapes along the rocks.

133 EXT PLANET P -- CANYON -- DAY -- GILLESPIE

scans for a signal.

GILLESPIE
Roughneck Patrol to Whiskey Outpost... come in Whiskey Outpost...

He is answered by a whine of static. With an ear-splitting screech, a HOPPER, a warrior with wings and powerful hind legs, dives down from the canyon rim and skewers Gillespie with its STINGER.

GILLESPIE
GAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!

The hopper swoops back up to the high rocks. The COM PACK falls, breaking to pieces on the canyon floor.

Up on the cliff, they can see Gillespie writhes in the hopper's claws, screaming as the bug rips into him with its attack claws.

GILLESPIE
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!

RASCZAK
Sugar... gimmee your weapon.

Sugar Watkins tosses Rasczak his Morita which is fitted with a SCOPE. Rasczak sights in on Gillespie and the hopper, and fires, killing Gillespie.

The hopper jumps away to cover. Rasczak throws the Morita back to Sugar Watkins.

RASCZAK
I expect any one here to do the same for me... Rico, you're acting Sergeant. Move out.

JOHNNY
You heard the Lieutenant. Saddle up!

The Roughnecks move out, Moritas held ready, eyes scanning the canyon walls.

134 EXT PLANET P -- FLATLANDS -- DAY -- THE ROUGHNECKS

move down to a windy plain. In the distance, WHISKEY OUTPOST, a standard issue PREFAB walled compound. The ramp is down and the compound stands open. The GUN TOWER is unmanned.

As they approach the outpost, they see the upturned legs of a DEAD WARRIOR through the compound gate.

135 EXT WHISKEY OUTPOST -- DAY -- THE ROUGHNECKS

move through the main doors, open and creaking in the wind. REVEAL several DEAD WARRIORS and the remains of 20 DEAD CAP TROOPERS strewn over the complex.

SUGAR WATKINS
Jeez, someone really humped the bunk...

RASCZAK
Watkins, secure the compound.

SUGAR WATKINS
Yes, sir. Gimmee two up on the tower... now. OP there and there... second squad with me on the gate.

Roughnecks climb up the side of the GUN TOWER that mounts two twin-fifty CHAIN GUNS. Sugar and other Roughnecks close the compound gate. Rasczak turns to Johnny.

RASCZAK
Rico, we need retrieval. This place crawls. Get someone over to the communications tent and get me an uplink.

JOHNNY
Yes, sir. Diz, check it out.

Dizzy heads into the COMMUNICATIONS TENT.

135A INT KITCHEN TENT -- DAY -- RASCZAK AND JOHNNY

enter with Ace and others. There's a big REFRIGERATOR UNIT, dry goods, more DEAD CAP TROOPERS. Rasczak heads for the mess hall. Ace points, shocked by what he sees.

138 INT MESS HALL -- DAY -- RASCZAK AND JOHNNY

survey the aftermath of a last stand. The carnage is extraordinary. There's a bug hole in the floor, a DEAD WARRIOR sprawled in one corner, and the remains of 50 DEAD CAP TROOPERS.

ACE
Dirty bugs came in right when they were having chow!

Johnny sees a strange new bug dead in one corner. The CHARIOT BUG is a low-slung insect, 1.5 meters long, black with an imperial red flash pattern. Johnny uses the butt of his Morita to crack its shell. Bug guts goosh out.

DIZZY (O.S.)
Lieutenant, I think you're gonna wanna see this.

138A INT COMMUNICATIONS -- DAY -- RASCZAK AND JOHNNY

enter the ravaged radio room. A DEAD MAJOR is slumped over the console with a hole in the back of his head.

RASCZAK
What's that look like to you, Rico?

JOHNNY
Looks like a bug was in his brain, sir.

Rasczak checks the dead major's wound with steel fingers.

RASCZAK
They sucked his brains out.

Then they hear a sound. Tap tap tap. Rasczak signals for quiet. Tap tap tap tap. It's coming from the kitchen tent.

139 INT KITCHEN TENT -- DAY -- THE ROUGHNECKS

enter cautiously. The noise is coming from a freezer. Ace stands ready to fire. Johnny levers open the door, jumps back as GENERAL OWEN, 50s, tumbles out face first.

ACE
Officer on the deck, sir.

RASCZAK
Pick up the General!

Roughnecks prop him up. General Owen rambles incoherently.

GENERAL OWEN
Are they gone...? Is it safe...? We've got to get out of here...!

Rasczak realizes that there is something wrong with the man, something is broken.

RASCZAK
General Owen... sir?

The General grins, hugely relieved.

GENERAL OWEN
Thank God for you... all of you... you're heroes... you're all gonna be friggin heroes...

RASCZAK
Close that hole.

ACE
Fire in the hole!

GENERAL OWEN
So where's the boat?

An explosion in the mess hall closes the bug hole.

140 INT COMMUNICATIONS -- DAY -- JOHNNY AND RASCZAK

help the old General, now wrapped in a blanket, rambling.

GENERAL OWEN
I had to evade capture. The security of the goddam Federation was at stake...! I have operational knowledge of what we're up to out here...!

Dizzy works at a radio console, looks up as Rasczak and Johnny come in with General Owen.

JOHNNY
Diz, what's with the uplink?

DIZZY
Workin on it...!

General Owen points at the hole in the dead major's head.

GENERAL OWEN
There! See! They get in your mind... Look... they did it to Farley...!

His finger starts to shake. He begins to rant.

GENERAL OWEN
Here. They got in his mind... They make you do things... They made Farley call headquarters...

Johnny's eyes narrow.

JOHNNY
The distress call was a trap.

GENERAL OWEN
They're just like us. They want to know what makes us tick! They want to know us... so they can kill us!

RASCZAK
(on the com)
Roughnecks, Roughnecks, this is lead. Prepare for attack. Repeat. We are going to be attacked...!

General Owen's face falls.

GENERAL OWEN
You mean there's no retrieval boat?

Rasczak looks at General Owen with contempt, exits.

141 EXT TENTS -- DAY -- GENERAL OWEN

blinks as he steps out into the light. Roughnecks snap to attention. General Owen begins to keen.

GENERAL OWEN
Oh God... WE'RE ALL GONNA DIE!

The Roughnecks are shocked. They've never seen an officer break down before. Rasczak slaps Owen hard.

RASCZAK
Control yourself, General...

Owen collapses to his knees, sobbing.

GENERAL OWEN
I can't! I... I'm sorry... I wish you'd just shoot me...

RASCZAK
I should.

He unslings his Morita. Johnny steps in.

JOHNNY
He's just a little... out of his mind, sir...

Rasczak considers, but then Sugar Watkins shouts down from the ramparts.

SUGAR WATKINS
Bugs... BUGS!!!

Rasczak turns toward the walls, shouting instructions.

RASCZAK
Alright, warm it all up! Everything you got! Com'on you apes, you wanna live forever?

142 EXT RAMPARTS -- DAY -- RASCZAK

and Johnny join other stunned Roughnecks to see thousands of bugs closing in from across the rocky plains of Planet P.

Johnny checks his Morita. Up and down the ramparts other Roughnecks do the same as the bugs charge in across the plain.

RASCZAK
Fire at will!

142B EXT GUN TOWER -- PLATFORM -- DAY -- ROUGHNECKS

open fire with the heavy twin-fifties.

142B EXT WHISKEY OUTPOST -- DAY -- WARRIORS

at the front of the charge go down only to be trampled by the oncoming wave of bugs.

142B EXT RAMPARTS -- DAY -- ROUGHNECKS

open fire along the walls as the first warriors pound into the walls below.

142C EXT WHISKEY OUTPOST -- DAY -- DEAD WARRIORS

begin piling up at the base of the the walls, the living crawling up over the dead, climbing against the walls until they are hit, too, and add to the growing pile.

A WARRIOR attacks a SUSPENSION POLE. Roughnecks blast it from above, but another takes its place and soon the pole comes crashing down.

142D EXT RAMPARTS -- DAY -- THE ROUGHNECKS

pour a withering fire down on the advancing bugs. The tower guns blaze overhead.

142E EXT WHISKEY OUTPOST -- FROM ABOVE -- DAY -- THE COMPOUND

is an island in a sea of warriors. A formation of HOPPERS sail into frame, diving down on the compound.

142F EXT RAMPARTS -- DAY -- HOPPERS

scream down out of the sky, slashing and killing THREE ROUGHNECKS even as Rasczak shouts:

RASCZAK
INCOMING!

A fourth HOPPER dives down on Johnny. He fires dead on, rock and roll, falling back as the hopper roars over him. He fires straight up point blank into the bug.

The damaged hopper careens into the compound. A SHADOW falls on General Owen as he prays. He looks up.

GENERAL OWEN
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!

The hopper crashes down on top of him, crushing him like a bug as it augers into the kitchen tent. Up on the ramparts, Rasczak sees more HOPPERS diving toward the gun tower from the rear. He shouts to the Roughnecks on the tower.

RASCZAK
TOWER GUNS, WATCH YOUR SIX!

142G EXT GUN TOWER -- PLATFORM -- DAY -- THE ROUGHNECKS

turn their twin fifties on the incoming hoppers, blowing them out of the sky. They careen into the seething horde of bugs where the piles of insect dead form ramps that now reach halfway up the side of the compound wall.

142H EXT RAMPARTS -- DAY -- RASCZAK

turns to Johnny.

RASCZAK
Rico, where's my communications?

JOHNNY
(on the com)
What's with the uplink, Diz?

DIZZY (O.S.)
Gimmee a minute...

Johnny swings down off the rampart and runs for the communications tent.

JOHNNY
(on the com)
We don't have a minute!

142I EXT WHISKEY OUTPOST -- DAY -- WARRIORS

continue to climb and die at the walls. They have nearly reached the top of the compound wall. A second SUSPENSION POLE falls away under the press of the warrior's unrelenting attack.

143 INT COMMUNICATIONS -- DAY -- DIZZY

has the board up. Johnny rushes in.

DIZZY
This is Roughneck patrol to battle group. We are... I got'em!

RODGER YOUNG (O.S.)
This is Rodger Young... go ahead.

Johnny grabs the hand set.

JOHNNY
We are under attack, sir, and we need retrieval now!

RODGER YOUNG (O.S.)
We have Planet P as clear...! What's going on down there?

JOHNNY
This place crawls, sir. We need pick up now!

RODGER YOUNG (O.S.)
What is your position?

JOHNNY
Suggest you come down on this transmission! Landing zone is extremely hostile.

RODGER YOUNG (O.S.)
Inside the outpost? That's crazy!

JOHNNY
Hope you have a crazy pilot... out!

143A EXT RAMPARTS -- DAY -- THE WARRIORS

have reached the top of the outpost walls. The first warrior hurtles up the ramp and over the wall. Roughnecks blow the warrior off the ramparts, firing at it down into the compound and killing it on the ground. More warriors climb up into the compound.

Rasczak looks right. Bugs have attained a ramp at the other corner and are climbing into the outpost from a second position.

Sugar and Ace and a THIRD ROUGHNECK turn and fight the new menace on the right flank.

Rasczak looks out over the battle field, takes in the sea of warriors.

144A EXT WHISKEY OUTPOST -- DAY -- WARRIORS

continue to pile against the outpost walls, and now the living are crawling over the living and the whole landscape is moving, seething against the compound.

144B EXT WHISKEY COMPOUND & RAMPARTS -- DAY -- RASCZAK

turns at the sound of a voice.

JOHNNY (O.S.)
Lieutenant!

Johnny and Dizzy arrive below in the compound.

JOHNNY
Boat coming down, sir!

RASCZAK
Fall back into the compound!

Roughnecks jump off the walls. Ace miraculously avoids the deadly jaws of an attacking warrior, but the less fortunate third Roughneck is hooked from behind and hurled back over the compound wall.

Johnny and Dizzy open fire on the warrior and kill it as it charges down the rampart at them.

RASCZAK
HOLD HERE... HOLD WHAT YOU GOT!

The Roughnecks pull back into a semi-circle that affords them 180 degrees of kill zone.

The Roughnecks methodically kill warriors as they pile over the wall. The tower guns sweep the ramparts from above, blowing warriors to pieces.

SUGAR WATKINS
Running low!

DIZZY
I'm out!

Johnny tosses her a spare magazine.

JOHNNY
Make'em count!

A charging WARRIOR crashes into the perimeter, tears a chunk out of a ROUGHNECK.

The Roughnecks close ranks, firing a continuous volley, their faces a study of desperate determination. Johnny hears engines, looks up.

A RETRIEVAL BOAT hurtles down from the sky and lands in the compound. Roughnecks cheer, saved!

RASCZAK
Fire and fall back!

Roughnecks fall back and fire. The tower gunners slide down the tower ladder. The retrieval boat's hatch ratchets open and Zander Barcalow steps out with a Morita to lay down cover fire.

RASCZAK
Haul ass!

Suddenly, the deck plates beneath Rasczak's feet erupt and he loses his balance. SOMETHING HUGE punches up out of the ground, then withdraws. The ground caves in beneath him.

Rasczak struggles to climb out, but something grabs him from under the ground and pulls him down.

RASCZAK
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!

Johnny and Dizzy struggle to pull Rasczak free. There is a grizzly snap. Johnny falls back, and Rasczak minus his legs falls on top of him.

RASCZAK
You know what to do, Rico...

JOHNNY
Yes, sir.

Johnny climbs to his feet, swings his Morita down toward Rasczak. A look. Johnny lets go a burst, turns away bitterly as...

The ground SHAKES and opens with tremendous force. A TANKER BUG pushes up into the compound, clawing at the ground with huge legs to pull its abdomen out of the ground.

Johnny and Dizzy run for the retrieval boat. Dizzy pulls out a grenade and pops the cap. The tanker struggles up, it's head coming down to spray. Dizzy turns and hurls the grenade and hits it dead in the mouth.

The tanker bug explodes. She turns to Johnny, grinning, amazed as she makes a fist, victorious. A warrior charges in from the side.

JOHNNY
DIZZY!

Johnny opens fire as the bug hits her with its attack claws, four times like bullets through her back. She collapses, a lingering smile turning to disbelief.

Johnny advances on the warrior, fueled by hate. Ace steps in, adds his firepower, and they blow the warrior to pieces. Johnny rushes to Dizzy.

Blood pours out of her wounds. Johnny tries to stop the blood with his hand. The life is leaving her eyes.

JOHNNY
Hang on, Diz... don't die on me...

Johnny picks her up, Ace is there to lend a hand. They carry her across the compound with other Roughnecks who continue to fire at the bugs as they fall back.

Suddenly, the compound wall begins to buckle, seams popping under a tremendous pounding from the outside.

144C EXT WHISKEY OUTPOST -- DAY -- A TANKER BUG

throws itself against the compound wall.

144E EXT WHISKEY OUTPOST -- DAY -- JOHNNY AND ACE

carry Dizzy into the boat past Zander and Roughnecks who fire from the door. A strange moment in the heat of battle for Zander: What's this guy doing here?

Suddenly, a section of the outpost wall collapses. The tanker bug pushes it's head into the the compound, driving into the shattered wall.

ZANDER
LET'S GO, M.I.!

Zander heads into the boat. The last two Roughnecks race for the boat as the tanker smashes through the wall and moves into the compound.

Its monsterous head comes down and it sprays, hitting the retreating Roughnecks. Instantly, they begin to melt, screaming. The tanker charges forward toward the boat.

144E INT BOAT -- DAY -- ZANDER

turns with resignation and hits the switch that closes the hatch.

ZANDER
Lift off!

144F EXT COMPOUND -- DAY -- MELTING ROUGHNECKS

collapse as their bodies literally dissolve away under them. The boat lifts off.

The tanker bug raises itself, tracking the boat and spraying. The boat blasts away dripping metal.

The tanker bug advances into the compound, clipping the gun tower and knocking it over. WARRIORS flood through the broken wall into the outpost.

145 INT BOAT -- CARGO BAY -- DAY -- JOHNNY

holds Dizzy in his arms, drenched in her blood, fighting G-forces as the boat heads for orbit. Zander watches Johnny with Dizzy as she dies.

DIZZY
Johnny... I'm dying...

JOHNNY
No, you're gonna be alright, Diz...

She smiles feebly. Johnny sees the blood pouring out of her.

DIZZY
It's alright... 'cause I got to have you.

She starts to choke. She can't breath. Her body thrashes.

DIZZY
NO, JOHNNY DON'T HEH LET ME GO! DON'T JOHNNY HEH HEH DON'T HEH LET HEH GO HEH HEH HEH HEH...!

Dizzy dies. Johnny sits, stunned, holding Dizzy in his arms. No one says anything. The ride gets bumpy. Outside, the sound of bug plasma. Zander makes his way to the cockpit.

146 INT BOAT -- COCKPIT -- DAY -- CARMEN

sits in the pilot's seat, working hard to avoid BUG PLASMA that blows past from below. Zander takes his seat, wearily.

ZANDER
I think you should know... Your friend Rico is back there.

Carmen's expression is one of shock and confusion. Her eyes fill with tears.

CARMEN
Johnny...?

146A EXT PLANET P -- LOW ORBIT -- THE DROP SHIP

does a particularly impressive maneuver to avoid a shaft of bug plasma.

146B INT RETRIEVAL BOAT -- COCKPIT -- JOHNNY

comes up the cockpit ladder. Carmen wipes her eyes, continues to fly. Johnny climbs into the cockpit behind them, grim.

JOHNNY
Would'ya get on the com and tell Fleet to glass that rock?

ZANDER
On whose authority, Corporal?

JOHNNY
Mine, sir. I've assumed command of this mission.

Carmen turns around. Surprise registers on Johnny's face. Meanwhile, Zander punches up Fleet Command.

ZANDER
Rodger Young, this is inbound shuttle De Ruyter with an official request from the Mobile Infantry to commence bombardment of Planet P...

CARMEN
Johnny... I thought you were dead.

Johnny shrugs.

JOHNNY
I'm not, but a lot of my cap troopers are.

ZANDER
P was supposed to be clean.

JOHNNY
We got creamed.

Deladier appears on the a monitor.

DELADIER (O.S.)
Negative on your request, De Ruyter. The Sky Marshall has other plans for Planet P. Welcome back.

Annoyance flickers across Johnny's face.

JOHNNY
Well, M.I. does the dying, and Fleet just does the flying...

Zander glares. Johnny turns to leave.

CARMEN
Hold on... Something's up. The Sky Marshall's here... the Fleet's mobilized for a big operation.

Carmen points out the front port. Johnny sees the Sky Marshall's carrier, Buenos Aires, and twelve more battle groups, 100 ships strong.

147 EXT BATTLE GROUP -- ORION SYSTEM -- THE BOAT

heads toward the flight deck of the **Rodger Young** in the midst of the flotilla.

148 INT RODGER YOUNG -- OFFICER'S QUARTERS -- CARMEN

uses a mirror to put makeup on. Zander appears behind her.

ZANDER
Hey, where are you going?

CARMEN
There's a funeral in the pod bay...

ZANDER
That girl who died on the way up?

CARMEN
Yeah... Her name was Dizzy Flores. Johnny and I went to school with her.

She turns to leave. Zander stops her.

ZANDER
How do you feel about him now?

CARMEN
I'm glad he's not dead.

ZANDER
That's all?

CARMEN
Maybe that's as good as its gets.

She heads out.

149 INT RODGER YOUNG -- LIFE POD BAY -- CARMEN

enters as Johnny speaks. The COFFIN is open, and Dizzy is laid out in dress gray. The surviving Roughnecks have gathered to pay final respects.

JOHNNY
Someone once asked me if I knew the difference between a citizen and a civilian. I can tell you now. A citizen has the guts to make the safety of the human race their personal responsibility. Dizzy was a good friend, she was a great soldier, but above all, she was a citizen of the Federation.

Johnny steps back, salutes Dizzy. Everyone salutes. Carmen salutes. The FUNERAL DETAIL loads Dizzy's body into a launch tube. The CREW CHIEF fires the tube.

Out the view ports, Dizzy's coffin floats toward the Tango Urilla's twin suns. Suddenly doors open and several INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS march into the bay.

JOHNNY
Officer on the deck!

Everyone snaps to attention. Lt. Colonel Carl Jenkins strides into the room. His eyes are hollow, and he looks grim. He returns Johnny's salute, nods to Carmen.

CARL
At ease.

JOHNNY
How are you, Carl?

CARL
Johnny, I'm sorry it had to be your unit on Planet P. That mission had a very low survival probability...

JOHNNY
Bugs laid a trap, didn't they?

CARL
Elegant proof of intelligence, isn't it? We thought there might be a Brain on P.

CARMEN
You knew and you sent them anyway?

CARL
We couldn't afford to launch an operation if there wasn't one...

Carl sees the way Carmen is looking at him, like he's a bug.

CARL
You don't approve. Well, too bad. We're in this for the species, boys and girls. It's simple numbers, they have more, and everyday I have to make decisions that send hundreds of people like you to their deaths.

JOHNNY
Didn't they tell you, Colonel? That's what the Mobile Infantry are good for.

Carl allows himself a tiny smile.

CARL
Hope you're ready for more. We're going back to P to capture that Brain.

JOHNNY
The Roughnecks are always ready, sir.

CARL
I hear they need a new Lieutenant... Want the job?

JOHNNY
I'll take it... until I get killed or you find someone better.

KLAXONS sound. Suddenly, everyone has someplace to go.

CARMEN
Hope you get your bug, Carl.

CARL
It's good to see you two. It reminds me of the way things used to be.

Carl turns and heads away. His entourage follows.

CARMEN
Take care of yourself, Johnny.

JOHNNY
I'll see you again...

151 EXT PLANET P -- LANDING ZONE X-RAY -- DAY -- DROP SHIPS

land and lift off with regularity here and on two other LZs in the distance deploying hundreds of CAP TROOPERS, among them the Roughnecks.

Engineers are at work rebuilding the compound. Dead bugs are burned in piles. The dead are stacked in body bags on pallets for return home.

YOUNG CAP TROOPER
Officer on the deck!

Roughnecks snap to attention. Johnny walks up flanked by Sugar Watkins, now wearing Sergeant's stripes, and Ace who is Johnny's radioman. He looks at all the new faces.

JOHNNY
Who're all these kids?

ACE
We got reinforced. Most of'em just got outta boot...

JOHNNY
We're the old men, Ace...
(then)
This is for you new people. I only have one rule. Everyone fights. No one quits. If you don't do your job, I'll kill you myself. Do you get me?

ROUGHNECKS
We get you, sir!

JOHNNY
Welcome to the Roughnecks.

ACE
Rico's Roughnecks!

JOHNNY
Today we are going to pay a visit to Bug City. We're looking for a bug no one's ever seen before... some kinda smart bug...

In the distance, bug batteries open fire with concussions like sonic thunder, joined quickly by more until the horizon is filled with outgoing plasma.

JOHNNY
...and it probably knows we're coming. Saddle up!

153 EXT SPACE -- PLANET P ORBIT -- STARSHIPS

are stacked up in orbit as the BUG PLASMA BARRAGE from the planet begins to shred the Fleet.

154 INT RODGER YOUNG -- BRIDGE -- CAPTAIN DELADIER

watches as ships take explosive hits of plasma.

DELADIER
Evasive action!

Carmen instigates evasive maneuvers,flying between crippled starships that reel dangerously across her path.

DELADIER
Get us clear for warp, Number 2...

The crippled Giap skates into their path, looming dead ahead. Carmen brings the nose up, clearing Giap by mere meters.

CARMEN
Clear in 5... 4....

ZANDER
Initiating star drive in --

155 EXT PLANET P -- KA-WHAM! THE RODGER YOUNG

takes a direct plasma hit.

155A INT RODGER YOUNG -- VARIOUS -- BULKHEADS

blow apart and CREWMEN are engulfed by the blast.

155B INT RODGER YOUNG -- COMMAND AND CONTROL -- CARMEN, ZANDER

and Deladier go flying across the bridge as the ship is rocked by the hit.

155C EXT RODGER YOUNG -- PLANET P ORBIT -- THE RODGER YOUNG

has been cut in two by the plasma blast.

155D INT RODGER YOUNG -- COMMAND AND CONTROL -- CARMEN

and the others start to pick themselves up off the deck. SPARKS rain down from above. WHITE GAS pumps into the cabin.

155E EXT RODGER YOUNG -- THE REAR SECTON

explodes. The forward section plunges toward the planet as it begins to burn towards the bridge.

156 INT RODGER YOUNG -- BRIDGE -- CARMEN

and the others tumble back as the bridge tilts at a 20 degree angle. Carmen wrenches herself around and grabs for the radio.

CARMEN
This is Rodger Young, we're going down... Repeat, this is Rodger Young, we're going down...!

DELADIER
Abandon ship!

They hurl themselves down the inclined bridge.

156A EXT PLANET P ORBIT -- THE RODGER YOUNG

rolls toward the planet as LIFE PODS shoot out from different escape tubes.

157 INT RODGER YOUNG -- CORRIDOR -- DELADIER, CARMEN AND ZANDER

slide down a tilting corridor, slamming hard into a bulkhead. Up ahead an automatic airlock is closing. Carmen and Zander dive through followed by Deladier.

DELADIER
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!

Deladier is caught by the heavy door, screaming as it crushes her. Zander pounds the release.

DELADIER
(as she dies)
Abandon ship... that's an order...

Carmen sees that it's hopeless.

CARMEN
She's dead... we'll be dead, too, if we don't get out!

Zander knows she's right. They race down the companionway. An explosion ruptures the hallway behind them.

157A INT RODGER YOUNG -- INTERSECTION -- CARMEN AND ZANDER

are blown into an intersecting corridor. Desperate FLEET PERSONNEL stampede past them, careening down a falling corridor where another explosion consumes them.

Zander yanks Carmen up into a doorway as the blast rips by.

158 INT RODGER YOUNG -- LIFE POD BAY -- CARMEN AND ZANDER

struggle onto the upper deck of the life pod bay where below a POD blasts away leaving a single remaining LIFE POD. Carmen and Zander climb down into the pod bay.

158A EXT RODGER YOUNG -- THE SHIP

is shaken by a huge internal explosion, and begins to break up. Great chunks of exposed deck spiral past CAMERA.

158B INT RODGER YOUNG -- LIFE POD BAY -- CARMEN AND ZANDER

tumble down into the pod bay as the deck yaws violently. They pick themselves up and move to the pod. Zander jumps into the second seat and powers up the pod.

Carmen throws herself into the first seat. Zander closes the pod as an EXPLOSION rocks the bay. Fire blows down into the bay.

158B INT LIFE POD -- CARMEN

lights the main thruster. The impact is tremendous. The shock kicks them back into their seats.

158B INT LIFE POD BAY -- THE SECOND LIFE POD

blasts out of the burning bay.

158D INT RODGER YOUNG -- LIFE POD LAUNCH TUBE -- THE LIFE POD

shoots past gaining velocity.

158E EXT RODGER YOUNG -- THE LIFE POD

shoots out the side of the Rodger Young as it EXPLODES.

158F INT LIFE POD -- PLANET P ORBIT -- CARMEN

is on the stick, setting a downward trajectory through a graveyard of floating wreckage, someone's trombone, a dead cap trooper bounces off the front window.

CARMEN
Bravo eject! Bravo eject!

ZANDER
Nav aides beacon activated.

CARMEN
Life pod Romeo Yankee six three.
Two aboard...

Zander punches up the rescue band. Military maps of Planet P with flags to mark Mobile Infantry company headquarters. Zander selects the closest flag, scans terrain profiles.

ZANDER
No good... no good... can you
handle this...

It plays on Carmen's nav screen, a wire-frame view of a canyon with a slow curve.

CARMEN
Piece of cake.

160A EXT PLANET P -- THE LIFE POD

arcs down toward the planet.

CARMEN (O.S.)
Romeo Yankee six three... going
in...

161 EXT PLANET P -- DAY -- ROUGHNECKS

make their way up a craggy hillside. Ace pauses, hears something on the com. He finds Johnny at the gaping mouth of a bug tunnel.

ACE
The Rodger Young just burned up!
It's on the rescue net...

Johnny's face falls.

JOHNNY
Survivors?

Ace switches on the COM SPEAKER. It scans radio frequency catching chaotic cross talk, shouts and screams of commanders aboard ships in trouble.

ACE
Man, they're gettin tarred up
there.

CARMEN (O.S.)
Bravo eject! Bravo eject! Life pod Romeo Yankee six three. Two aboard... Is anyone receiving?

Johnny grabs the handset from Ace.

JOHNNY
Affirmative! This is Rough...

162 INT LIFE POD -- ATMOSPHERE -- DAY -- CARMEN

is shaken violently as the pod hits atmosphere. The radio is rough with bursts of static.

JOHNNY (V.O.)
...neck 2-0... Carmen...?
Carmen...!

162A EXT PLANET P -- DAY -- THE LIFE POD

screams down out of the sky.

162B INT LIFE POD -- DAY -- CARMEN

fights for control as jagged alien terrain comes up fast. She swerves to avoid a mountain, steers the life pod into a "slot" between mountain ranges, hits a switch.

162C EXT PLANET P -- DAY -- THE LIFE POD

retro rockets fire. FLAME from the thrusters blows back, enveloping the life pod. The pod loses altitude, heading for relatively flat terrain.

162D INT LIFE POD -- DAY -- CARMEN

brings the pod down.

163 EXT PLANET P -- DAY -- THE LIFE POD

hits the ground with tremendous impact.

163A INT LIFE POD -- DAY -- CARMEN

slams her head against a strut as the pod bounces.

163A EXT PLANET P -- DAY -- THE LIFE POD

hits a second time and goes straight through the crust of Planet P.

163A INT BUG CITY CAVERN -- DAY -- THE POD

crashes down into a large cavern, careens off one wall and comes to a halt on its side. FIRE sputters under the pod's engine cowling.

163B INT LIFE POD -- DAY -- ZANDER

shakes off the impact. The cockpit fills with smoke. He reaches for Carmen. She's out cold. He smacks her, she comes too.

ZANDER
Get out!

Zander blows the canopy.

164 INT BUG CITY CAVERN -- DAY -- CARMEN AND ZANDER

roll out of the life pod. The cavern is a junction of high and low tunnels. CREEPY INSECT SHADOWS appear foreground from the high tunnels.

JOHNNY (O.S.)
...this is Roughneck 2-0...
Carmen, are you receiving?

Carmen reaches into the smoking cockpit for the handset. Zander pops the pod's side compartment. Inside, FLEET CARBINES, a KNIFE, and a COMPASS. Zander slides the knife into his boot, then pulls out the carbines.

CARMEN
Johnny? Is that you?

165 EXT PLANET P -- DAY -- JOHNNY

grins, happy to hear her voice.

JOHNNY
It's me! Position and situation?

166 INT BUG CITY CAVERN -- DAY -- ZANDER

hands her the compass, arms the carbines.

CARMEN
We are ten meters subterra in bug city at... hold on...

DARK INSECT SHAPES move in the tunnels.

CARMEN
...map position golf five...
South 42, East 118... situation
is...

WARRIORS enter the cavern, tumbling down from the high tunnels while others crab across the cavern floor.

CARMEN
...eminently hostile!

Zander tosses Carmen a carbine and they open fire, back to back.

166A EXT PLANET P -- DAY -- SUGAR WATKINS

checks a compass, points.

JOHNNY
I need a squad to pull them
out...!

SUGAR WATKINS
Three clicks, south by
southwest... there!

166B INT BUG CITY CAVERN -- DAY -- CARMEN AND ZANDER

fight for their lives as warriors flood down into the cavern. A warrior comes in behind Zander, swings its huge jaws and knocks him flying.

Zander hits the ground, losing his carbine. He reaches for it. The warrior lunges forward and puts an attack claw through Zander's leg, spiking him to the floor.

ZANDER
AAAAAAAAAAAAA!

Carmen turns, firing at the insect that has Zander. A warrior charges her from behind, puts a claw through her shoulder as it brings her down.

CARMEN
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAA...

166C EXT PLANET P -- DAY -- JOHNNY

and Ace are horrified by what they hear. The sound of the life pod as it is crushed, bugs screeches, Carmen's terror.

CARMEN (O.S.)
...AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!

The signal is suddenly broken. Johnny stands stunned, holding the handset, thinking. No one says anything, until:

ACE
Whad'ya wanna do?

SUGAR WATKINS
You heard the Lieutenant, rescue party...

JOHNNY
Cancel that... You know as well as I do she's dead.

Sugar Watkins nods his head in grim acceptance.

ACE
Sorry, buddy...

JOHNNY
Move it out, Roughnecks.

Sugar Watkins and other Roughnecks light flashlights as they head down the tunnel into the dark.

167A INT BUG CITY CAVERN -- DAY -- CARMEN AND ZANDER

are where we left them, immobilized, spiked by the two warriors. Any movement on their part illicits a threat display from the menacing insects.

CARMEN
Why didn't they kill us?

ZANDER
They want us alive...

There is a DISTANT CLICKING SOUND from another part of the cavern. Warriors move aside.

SEVEN CHARIOT BUGS scuttle into the cavern, whisking between warriors legs, racing back out of the cavern as soon as they see Zander and Carmen.

169 INT BUG CITY TUNNELS -- FORK -- DAY -- SUGAR WATKINS

is on point as they a bend and come to a split in the tunnel. One tunnel leads to the right, the other to the left.

Sugar Watkins checks his compass, heads down the tunnel, followed by other Roughnecks. Johnny starts to follow. Suddenly, he slows down and stops.

Ace notices, and so do the others. Johnny cocks his head, looks back at the tunnel to the right, walks toward it.

JOHNNY
This way.

Sugar Watkins checks his compass.

SUGAR WATKINS
No, A company is that way.

JOHNNY
Yeah, but...
(he breaks into a grin)
...Carmen's this way.

ACE
I hate to be rude, man, but word has it she's KIA...!

JOHNNY
No... she's alive.

Ace looks at Johnny like he's crazy.

ACE
How do you know?

JOHNNY
I don't know how I know, but... I know.

ACE
Listen, you got command, but going off mission is a serious offense...

SUGAR WATKINS
I think they hang ya...

JOHNNY
Roughneck 2-0 will proceed on mission. I need two volunteers.

Johnny starts down the right tunnel.

171 INT BUG CITY CAVERN -- DAY -- CARMEN AND ZANDER

hear CLICKING sounds close by. They look up to see:

The BRAIN BUG enters from a tunnel, floating. It's big and pulpy (5 meters) with huge vestigial legs. It moves across the cavern on a shifting carpet of chariot bugs.

They watch with horror and revulsion as the chariot bugs set the big bug down in front of Zander.

Zander sees himself reflected eight times in the eyes of the Brain Bug. A thorn-like PALP unfolds from the sphincter between the giant insect's two sets of eyes.

ZANDER
One day some guy like me's gonna kill you and your whole fuckin' race...

The Brain Bug strikes, driving the palp deep into Zander's head, and then rapidly sucking his brains out.

ZANDER
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!

Carmen watches horrified as Zander dies. The Brain Bug withdraws its palp, clicks several commands.

The warrior holding Carmen throws her forward with its attack claw and she lands in a heap at the brain bug's feet on top of Zander. She sees the knife in Zander's boot.

Carmen looks up into the bug's dead eyes, watches the thorn-like palp coming down toward her. She grabs the knife from Zander's boot, slashing out, cutting the palp in two.

The Brain Bug screeches and flails the injured limb, bug grue spraying out. It moves back on it's enormous legs, clicking commands.

Warriors move in to kill Carmen. She jumps to her feet, ready with the knife.

Suddenly the warriors stop, reacting to a familiar HIGH-PITCHED TONE. Carmen hears it, too. The Brain Bug turns to look. Johnny enters the chamber alone.

The warriors turn toward him. He holds up a nuke, source of the high-pitched tone. The ready light flashes. The Brain Bug's multiple eyes track his approach. Warriors react with hissing threat displays.

Sugar Watkins and Ace appear at the mouth of a tunnel, Morita's out and ready. Johnny puts the nuke in the Brain Bug's face.

JOHNNY
You know what this is...?
(he mimics an explosion)
Sure you do... You're some kinda big fat smart bug, aren't you?

The Brain Bug clicks. The warriors freeze.

JOHNNY
Come...

Johnny takes Carmen's hand, and they move toward Ace and Sugar. Chariot bugs flood under the Brain Bug and move it with surprising speed into a tunnel. Ace gets on the radio.

ACE
Brain Bug eyeballed moving west of map position Golf Five...!

A COMPANY (O.S.)
Copy that, Roughneck 2-0...

Johnny and Carmen join Sugar Watkins and Ace as the Brain Bug disappears down the tunnel and emits a series of echoing click commands.

Warriors charge. Everyone opens fire at once as they retreat to the mouth of a tunnel.

A warrior lunges at Sugar Watkins, ripping into his abdomen with an attack claw.

SUGAR WATKINS
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA...!

Carmen shoves the muzzle against the bug's head and fires. Ace and and Johnny pick Sugar up, all three firing a continuous barrage at the incoming warriors as they retreat into the tunnel.

171A INT TUNNEL -- DAY -- JOHNNY, CARMEN AND ACE

pour fire at the oncoming bugs. Warriors kick and scream, piling up as they die in the mouth of the tunnel. Sugar collapses.

SUGAR WATKINS
(clenched teeth)
Gimmee the nuke...!

JOHNNY
You tryin' to be a hero, Watkins?

SUGAR WATKINS
I'm tryin' to kill some bugs, sir!

Sugar grabs the nuke out of Johnny's hands.

SUGAR WATKINS
Now get outa here...!

Sugar opens fire. Johnny, Carmen and Ace run for it. Warriors pound past the dead warriors obstructing the tunnel. Sugar keeps firing. He smiles.

173 INT INCLINED TUNNEL -- DAY -- JOHNNY, CARMEN AND ACE

race desperately for the surface.

JOHNNY
GO GO GO GO GO...!

WOMP! The nuke goes off in the tunnels below, knocking them to the ground, dirt and rock sealing the tunnel behind them. They climb to their feet, look back grimly on Sugar's tomb.

174 INT INCLINED TUNNEL -- MOUTH -- DAY -- JOHNNY

and the other two survivors step out of the tunnel into the light. Outside, they see CAP TROOPERS running past.

175 EXT PLANET P -- DAY -- JOHNNY, CARMEN AND ACE

emerge from tunnel joining the line of excited cap troopers.

JOHNNY
What's going on?

CAP TROOPER
They got it!

They fall in with the crowd, moving around rocks to see: CAP TROOPERS using ropes to haul the Brain Bug up out of the ground in a heavy braided steel net.

Several of its legs are twisted, apparently broken during the capture. The crowd parts for a cadre of BRASS, Carl leading the way.

Carmen and Johnny watch with the others as Carl walks up to it without fear, puts his hand on the thing. The crowd becomes completely silent. Carl looks up.

GENERAL
What's it thinking, Colonel?

CARL
It's afraid...

Carl smiles in a cruel way. For a moment he can't contain himself.

CARL
IT'S AFRAID!

Everyone cheers. Cap Troopers fire their weapons in the air. Johnny and Carmen approach Carl as he heads to board the boat.

CARMEN
Carl, hey...

CARL
Well, look who's here. You made it. Good.

JOHNNY
It was you, wasn't it? You told me how to find Carmen...

Carl shrugs.

CARMEN
Thanks, Carl.

JOHNNY
I thought you couldn't do human.

CARL
Well, that's classified, but like I told you, it's a numbers game. The Federation needs all the heroes it can get...

CARMEN
You know, whenever the three of us are together I feel like things might just work out.

CARL
I hope you're right, Carmen... We've got one of their brains now. Pretty soon we'll know how they think, and then we'll know how to beat them. One day it'll be over, and everyone will forget that this was the moment. This is when it turned...

A SOLDIER is hoist high on the shoulders of his jubulent comrades, turning for all to see, moving forward.

CARL
...and it wasn't the mighty Fleet, it wasn't any fancy new weapon... it was a cap trooper named Zim who captured a brain...

JOHNNY
Zim...?

Zim is brought down in front of the brass. Johnny steps up to him, grinning.

JOHNNY
Hey, Sergeant Zim. Good job!

Zim turns, gives Johnny a wry look. He wears the single stripes of a private.

ZIM
Thank you, sir. That would be... Private Zim, sir.

Zim snaps to attention, salutes. Johnny has to smile.

JOHNNY
Carry on, private!

Johnny watches as SOLDIERS gather around Zim, who is smiling, self-conscious as admirers pump his hand and pound his back.

175A FROM THE FEDERAL NET -- BRAIN BUG CAPTURED!

The Brain Bug screams as FEDERAL SCIENTISTS puncture it's pulpy hide with probes.

OFFICIAL VOICE
What mysteries will the brain bug reveal? Federal scientists are working around the clock because they know that Mankind cannot defeat the Bug until we understand it...

Scientists shove a huge glowing speculum-type TOOL into the Brain Bug's palp orafice. The big bug screams still louder. Super title: Do you want to know more?

176 JOIN UP NOW!!

Track past gleaming NEXT GENERATION STARSHIPS parked row-by-row in the floating yards above Luna.

OFFICIAL VOICE
We have the ships...

178 NEW WEAPONS!

A CAP TROOPER shoulders a beefed-up MORITA MKII prototype and fires at a mountain. The top of the mountain is vaporized.

OFFICIAL VOICE
We have the weapons...

179 YOU!

A platoon of MOBILE INFANTRY. PULLBACK. This is only one of FIFTY PLATOONS.

OFFICIAL VOICE
We need soldiers...!

180 We are on the bridge of the Athena behind a PILOT.

OFFICIAL VOICE
Soldiers like First Lieutenant Stack Lumbreezer...

The pilot turns to the captain. It is the BALD CADET we saw earlier at Tereshkova Fleet Academy.

BALD CADET
We're over the target area now, Captain...

ZIP PAN to the Captain. It's CARMEN.

OFFICIAL VOICE
Soldiers like Captain Carmen Ibanez...

CARMEN
This is the Captain speaking. All personnel prepare for drop...

180A In the Ready Room with the Roughnecks, Carmen's voice blares over the P.A.

CARMEN (O.S.)
We are at D minus three and counting.

OFFICIAL VOICE
Soldiers like private Ace Levy and Lieutenant John Rico...

Ace grins as he slings his Morita, and Johnny shouts over his shoulder.

JOHNNY
Com'on, you apes, you wanna live forever?

Ace and other CAP TROOPERS race for their drop ships, committed warriors going into battle.

OFFICIAL VOICE
We need you all! Service guarantees citizenship.

180B Waves of drop ships hurtle toward the orange planet. Super title: **They'll keep fighting and they'll WIN!**